LORD KRISHNA
His Lilas and Teachings
Swami Sivananda

LORD KRISHNA
His Lilas and Teachings

Om

Dedicated

to

Lord Krishna

the World-Teacher

and flute-Bearer

of

Vrindavana

Om

"ANANDA KUTIR"
RISHIKESH

ॐ

10th April 1943.

Sweet Self,

Lord Krishna was the Purna Avatara with 16 Kalas. Every word of His teachings and every act of His was full of sublime object lessons of momentous import to humanity.

Study His teachings to Uddhava. Drink the nectar of Srimad Bhagavata. Sing His glories. Repeat His grand mantra. OM Namo Baghavate Vasudevaya. Do total self-surrender unto Him. You will soon attain union with Him.

Sivananda

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

EKASLOKI BHAGAVATAM

(Bhagavata in One Verse)

आदौ देवकिदेविगर्भजननं गोपीगृहे वर्धनं
मायापूतनाजीवितापहरणं गोवर्धनोद्धारणम् ।
कंसच्छेदनकौरवादिहननं कुन्तीसुतापालनं
एतद्भागवतं पुराणकथितं श्रीकृष्णलीलामृतम् ॥

In days of yore, the Lord, born of Devaki's womb, brought up in the house of Gopi (Yasoda), killed the wicked Putana of illusive form, and lifted the Govardhana hill, killed Kamsa and the sons of the Kuru race and protected the sons of Kunti. Thus is recited the essence of the ancient Bhagavata Purana consisting of the nectarine stories of the deeds of Lord Krishna.

CHATUH-SLOKI BHAGAVATAM

ज्ञानं परमगुह्यं मे यद्विज्ञानसमन्वितम् ।
सरहस्यं तदंगं च गृहाण गदितं मया ।।

(a) Hear from Me the most secret knowledge coupled with the essential experience and its component parts.

यावानहं यथाभावो यद्रूपगुणकर्मकः ।
तथैव तत्त्वविज्ञानमस्तु ते मदनुग्रहात् ।।

(b) May you realise by My Grace the knowledge of Myself and what form, qualities and actions I am endowed with.

अहमेवासमेवाग्रे नान्यद्यत्सदसत्परम् ।
पश्चादहं यदेतच्च योऽवशिष्येत सोऽस्म्यहम् ।।

1. Before the creation I alone existed. There was nothing, Sat or Asat (existence or non-existence). I am That which remains after dissolution.

ऋतेऽर्थं यत्प्रतीयेत प्रतीयेत चात्मनि ।
तद्विद्यादात्मनो मायां यथाभासो यथा तमः ।।

2. Understand that to be Maya or illusion which is devoid of any purpose, which is not to be found in the Self and which is unreal like light and darkness.

यथा महान्ति भूतानि भूतेषूच्चावचेष्वनु ।
प्रविष्टान्यप्रविष्टानि तथा तेषु न तेष्वहम् ।।

3. As the primary elements are amalgamated, with one another and also separate from one another at the same time, so I pervade the whole universe and am also separate from it.

एतावदेव जिज्ञास्यं तत्त्वजिज्ञासुनात्मनः ।
अन्वयव्यतिरेकाभ्यां यत्स्यात्सर्वत्र सर्वदा ।।

4. The aspirants should, by the methods of Anvaya-Vyatireka (positive and negative), know that thing which exists always and everywhere.

एतन्मतं समातिष्ठ परमेण समाधिना ।
भवान्कल्पविकल्पेषु न विमुह्यति कर्हिचित् ।।

(c) Experience this Truth through the highest Samadhi so that you will not be disturbed even by illusory objects.

SALUTATIONS TO LORD KRISHNA

(From Gopalatapani Upanishad)

नमो विश्वस्वरूपाय विश्वस्थित्यन्तहेतवे ।
विश्वेश्वराय विश्वाय गोविन्दाय नमोनमः ॥१॥

1. To Thee O Govinda, who is of the form of this universe, who is the cause of its preservation and destruction, who is its Lord, nay, who is the universe itself—I prostrate.

नमो विज्ञानरूपाय परमानन्दरूपिणे ।
कृष्णाय गोपीनाथाय गोविन्दाय नमोनमः ॥२॥

2. Salutations to Sri Krishna—Govinda, the Lord of the Gopis, who is an embodiment of Knowledge and Supreme Bliss.

नमः कमलनेत्राय नमः कमलमालिने ।
नमःकमलनाभाय कमलापतये नमः ॥३॥

3. Prostrations to Sri Krishna with lotus-like eyes, the Lord of Lakshmi, who wears a garland of lotuses, who has a lotus sprung from His navel.

बर्हापीडाभिरामाय रामायाकुण्ठमेधसे ।
रमामानसहंसाय गोविन्दाय नमोनमः ॥४॥

4. To Thee, O Govinda or Rama, who art the swan in the mind-lake of Lakshmi, whose decorated crown of peacock-feathers delights the hearts of men, who possesses an unfailing intellect—I prostrate.

कंसवंशविनाशाय केशिचाणूरघातिने ।
वृषभध्वजवन्द्याय पार्थसारथये नमः ॥५॥

5. Prostrations unto Thee, O charioteer of Arjuna, the

destroyer of Kesi and Chanura, the destroyer of the entire family of Kamsa, who is worshipped by Lord Siva who has the bull as His emblem.

वेणुनादविनोदाय गोपालायाहिमर्दिने ।
कालिन्दीकूललोलाय लोलकुण्डलधारिणे ।।६।।

6. Salutations unto Sri Krishna, the protector of cows, who destroyed the pride of serpent Kaaliya, who delights the hearers with His melodious flute, who wears beautiful earrings (*kundala*) and who plays joyfully on the banks of Kalindi (Yamuna).

वल्लवीवदनांभोजमालिने नृत्तशालिने ।
नमः प्रणतपालाय श्रीकृष्णाय नमोनमः ।।७।।

7. I prostrate to Sri Krishna who delights the Gopis who surround Him like so many lotuses with beautiful faces, with His elevating dances and who protects those who take refuge in Him.

नमः पापप्रणाशाय गोवर्धनधराय च ।
पूतनाजीवितान्ताय तृणावर्तासुहारिणे ।।८।।

8. To Thee, O destroyer of sins, the lifter of Govardhana hill, Who destroyed the wicked Putana and the great demon Trinavarta—I prostrate.

निष्कलाय विमोहाय शुद्धायाशुद्धवैरिणे ।
अद्वितीयाय महते श्रीकृष्णाय नमोनमः ।।९।।

9. Salutations unto Sri Krishna, the supreme Non-dual Being, who is ever pure, who is free from delusion, who is without parts, and who is the enemy of the impure-minded.

प्रसीद परमानन्द प्रसीद परमेश्वर ।
आधिव्याधिभुजङ्गेन दष्टं मामुद्धर प्रभो ।।१०।।

10. Be gracious, O Bliss Absolute! Be pleased, O

Supreme Lord! Heal me, O Lord, who am bitten by the venomous cobra of mental and bodily afflictions.

श्रीकृष्ण रुक्मिणीकान्त गोपीजनमनोहर ।
संसारसागरे मग्नं मामुद्धर जगद्गुरो ।।११।।

11. Sri Krishna, the Lord of Rukmini, O World Teacher! The enchanter of the hearts of Gopis, O Lord, lift me up from this ocean of births and deaths (*samsara*).

केशव क्लेशहरण नारायण जनार्दन ।
गोविन्द परमानन्द मा समुद्धर माधव ।।१२।।

12. O Kesava, the destroyer of afflictions, O Narayana, O Janardana (to whom people pray for help), O Govinda, O bliss absolute, O Lord of Lakshmi, guide me, protect me.

श्रीकृष्णाष्टोत्तरशतनामस्तोत्रम्

श्रीकृष्णः कमलनाथो वासुदेवः सनातनः ।
वसुदेवात्मजः पुण्यो लीलामानुषविग्रहः ।।१।।

श्रीवत्सकौस्तुभधरो यशोदावत्सलो हरिः ।
चतुर्भुजात्तचक्रासिगदाशंखाद्युदायुधः ।।२।।

देवकीनन्दनः श्रीशो नन्दगोपप्रियात्मजः
यमुनावेगसंहरी बलभद्रप्रियानुजः ।।३।।

पूतनाजीवितहरः शकटासुरभञ्जनः ।
नन्दव्रजजनानन्दी सच्चिदानन्दविग्रहः ।।४।।

नवनीतविलिप्तांगो नवनीतनटोऽनघः ।
नवनीतनवाहारो मुचुकुन्दप्रसादकः ।।५।।

षोडशस्त्रीसहस्रेशःत्रिभंगी मधुराकृतिः ।
शुकवागमृताब्धीन्दुर्गोविन्दो योगिनां पतिः ।।६।।

वत्सवाटचरोऽनन्तो धेनुकासुरभञ्जनः ।
तृणीकृततृणावर्तो यमलार्जुनभञ्जनः ।।७।।

उत्तालतालभेत्ता च तमालश्यामलाकृतिः ।
गोपगोपीश्वरो योगी कोटिसूर्यसमप्रभः ।।८।।

इलापतिः परंज्योतिर्यादवेन्द्रो यदूद्वहः ।
वनमाली पीतवासाः पारिजातापहारकः ।।९।।

गोवर्धनाचलोद्धर्ता गोपालः सर्वपालकः ।
अजो निरञ्जनः कामजनकः कञ्जलोजनः ।।१०।।

मधुहा मथुरानाथो द्वारकानायको बली ।
वृन्दावनान्तःसञ्चारी तुलसीदामभूषणः ।।११।।

स्यमन्तकमणेर्हर्ता नरनारायणात्मकः ।
कुब्जाकृष्णाम्बरधरो मायी परमपूरुषः ।।१२।।

मुष्टिकासुरचाणूरमल्लयुद्धविशारदः ।
संसारवैरी कंसारिर्मुरारिर्नरकान्तकः ।।१३।।

अनादिब्रह्मचारी च कृष्णाव्यसनकर्शकः ।
शिशुपालशिरच्छेत्ता दुर्योधनकुलान्तकः ।।१४।।

विदुराक्रूरवरदो विश्वरूपप्रदर्शकः ।
सत्यवाक् सत्यसंकल्पः सत्यभामारतो जयी ।।१५।।

सुभद्रापूर्वजो विष्णुः भीष्ममुक्तिप्रदायकः ।
जगद्गुरुर्जगन्नाथो वेणुनादविशारदः ।।१६।।

वृषभासुरविध्वंसी बाणासुरकरान्तकः ।
युधिष्ठिरप्रतिष्ठाता बर्हिबर्हावतंसकः ।।१७।।

पार्थसारथिरव्यक्तो गीतामृतमहोदधिः ।
कालीयफणमाणिक्यरञ्जितश्रीपदाम्बुजः ।।१८।।

दामोदरो यज्ञभोक्ता दानवेन्द्रविनाशकः ।
नारायणः परब्रह्म पन्नगाशनवाहनः ।।१९।।

जलक्रीडासमासक्तगोपीवस्त्रापहारकः ।
पुण्यश्लोकस्तीर्थपादो वेदवेद्यो दयानिधिः ।।२०।।

सर्वतीर्थात्मकः सर्वग्रहरूपी परात्परः ।
एवं कृष्णस्यदेवस्य नाम्नामष्टोत्तरं शतम् ।।२१।।

कृष्णनोमामृतन्नाम परमानन्दकारकम् ।
अत्युपद्रवदोषघ्नं परमायुष्यवर्धनम् ।।२२।।

।। इति श्रीकृष्णाष्टोत्तरशतनामस्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ।।

मधुराष्टकम्

अधरं मधुरं वदनं मधुरं नयनं मधुरं हसितं मधुरम् ।
हृदयं मधुरं गमनं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥१॥

वचनं मधुरं चरितं मधुरं वसनं मधुरं वलितं मधुरम् ।
चलितं मधुरं भ्रमितं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥२॥

वेणुर्मधुरो रेणुर्मधुरो वाणी मधुरा पादौ मधुरौ ।
नृत्यं मधुरं सख्यं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥३॥

गीतं मधुरं पीतं मधुरं भुक्तं मधुरं सुप्तं मधुरम् ।
रूपं मधुरं तिलकं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥४॥

करणं मधुरं तरणं मधुरं हरणं मधुरं रमणं मधुरम् ।
वमितं मधुरं शमितं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥५॥

गुञ्जा मधुरा माला मधुरा यमुना मधुरा वीची मधुरा ।
सलिलं मधुरं कमलं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥६॥

गोपी मधुरा लीला मधुरा युक्तं मधुरं मुक्तं मधुरम् ।
दृष्टं मधुरं शिष्टं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥७॥

गोपा मधुरा गावो मधुरा यष्टिर्मधुरा सृष्टिर्मधुरा ।
दलितं मधुरं फलितं मधुरं मधुराधिपतेरखिलं मधुरम् ॥८॥

THE SONG OF SWEETNESS

(To be sung in the same tune as the Sanskrit Madhurashtakam)

Sweet are His lips and His mien is sweet.
Sweet are His eyes as His smiles are sweet.
Sweet is His heart as His bearing is sweet.

> The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
> Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet are His words as His actions are sweet.
Sweet is His dress as His posture is sweet.
Sweet is His gait as His gestures are sweet.

> The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
> Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet is His flute and His foot-dust is sweet.
Sweet are His hands, as His blue feet are sweet.
Sweet is His dance and His friendship is sweet.

> The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
> Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet is His song and His pure drink is sweet.
Sweet is His food and His sleeping is sweet.
Sweet is His charm as His forehead is sweet.

> The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
> Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet are His limbs as His sporting is sweet.
Sweet are His guiles as His pranks are sweet.
Sweet is His mouth and His resting is sweet.

The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet is His pearl and His garland is sweet.
Sweet is Yamuna and Her rippling is sweet.
Sweet is the stream and the lotus is sweet.

The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet are His maids and His frolics are sweet.
Sweet is His love and His parting is sweet.
Sweet are His pets and His leavings are sweet.

The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Sweet are His mates and His cows are sweet.
Sweet is His staff as His creation is sweet.
Sweet is His wrath as His graces are sweet.

The Lord of sweetness is entirely sweet.
Lord Sri Krishna is entirely sweet.

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya
Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

INTRODUCTION

LORD KRISHNA—THE SUPREME LORD

Salutations to Lord Krishna, the Supreme Lord, who is the indweller of our hearts, who is Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute, who is the Soul of this universe, who bestows Immortality on His devotees, who is the source for everything and who took a human form for the benefit of the gods and His devotees, to destroy wickedness and establish righteousness.

I bow to that Para Brahman, the Supreme Self from whom is born this mysterious universe, by whom alone it is upheld, and in whom alone it is dissolved, who is Lord Krishna Himself.

Lord Krishna was the highest incarnation of the great Vishnu. He was the unique and crowning incarnation of all. He was the Purna Avatara, the Perfect Incarnation. He had sixteen Kalas or rays. He was a noble scion of the illustrious Yadava dynasty. He was the world-teacher. He was the one Lord of love. He was a lover of men. His divine form holds the heart of India captive in chains even today.

The Bhagavata, the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana—all proclaim with one voice that there was none to match Sri Krishna in beauty and elegance of form in all the three worlds.

His enchanting form with flute in hand is worshiped in the myriad homes of India. It is a form to which is poured out devotion and supreme love from the hearts of countless devotees not only in India but also in the West.

He was a noble embodiment of all the great qualities of head and heart. He was the towering genius of His age. He was a great historical figure. His sports of childhood contain countless object-lessons for all thinking men. He was a glorious and extraordinary personality.

Every word of Lord Krishna's teachings and every act of His is full of sublime and grand object-lessons of momentous import to humanity in a variety of ways.

Worship of Sri Krishna has been practised in India from the very commencement of the world culture. It is a part of the Veda itself. It is not a new cult. Sri Krishna has become the most common object of worship in the whole of India. Even in Latvia (Europe) hundreds of ladies worship Sri Krishna and repeat His Mantra OM NAMO BHAGAVATE VASUDEVAYA.

Lord Krishna was great in knowledge, great in emotion, great in action, altogether. The scriptures have not recorded any life more full, more intense, more sublime, more grand than His.

Though Lord Krishna appeared in human form, He had an Aprakritic, divine body. He did not take any birth. He did not die. He appeared and disappeared through His Yoga Maya. This is a secret known only to His devotees, Yogis and sages.

Lord Krishna has played various parts during His stay in the world. He drove the chariot of Arjuna. He was an excellent statesman. He was a master musician. He gave lessons to Narada in the art of playing the Vina. The music of His flute thrilled the hearts of Gopis and of all. He was a cowherd in Nandagaon and Gokul. He exhibited miracles even when He was a child and a boy. He killed many Rakshasas. He showed Viswaroopa to His mother. He did Rasalila, the secrets of which can only be understood by devotees like Narada, Gouranga, Radha, and the Gopis. He taught the supreme truths of Yoga, Bhakti and Vedanta to Arjuna and Uddhava. He had mastery over the sixty-four arts. That is why He is regarded as an Avatara with sixteen Kalas or Powers.

AVATARA

Avataras appear for special reasons in special circumstances. Whenever there is much unrighteousness, whenever confusion and disorder set in on account of

unrighteousness and baffle the well-ordered progress of the people, whenever the balance of human society is upset by selfish, ruthless and cruel beings, whenever irreligion and Adharma prevail, whenever the foundations of social organisations are undermined, Avataras appear to establish Dharma and to restore peace.

Avatara is a descent of God for the ascent of man. A ray from the Hiranyagarbha descends on earth with mighty powers to keep up the harmony of the universe. The work done by the Avataras and their teachings produce a benign spiritual influence on human beings and help them in their upward divine unfoldment and Self-realisation.

The Avatara comes to reveal the divine nature in man and makes him rise above the petty materialistic life of passion and egoism.

Greatest manifestations are called Avataras proper. Avesha, Amsa (partial) and Kala Avataras, Rishis, Munis, Prophets, Messiahs, Sons of God, messengers of God are minor manifestations.

The Avataras usually come with their particular favourite groups or companions. Lord Rama came with Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna. Lord Krishna came with Balarama, the Devas and Rishis. Sanaka came with Sanandana, Sanat Kumara and Sanatana.

Some like Sri Sankara, Ramanuja, come as teachers and spiritual leaders. Some like Chaitanya are born to instil devotion in the hearts of people and turn their minds towards God. Avataras proper like Krishna come only when there is widespread catastrophe in the land.

Many Avataras have discharged one function but Krishna's activities were many-sided. Hence He is styled as Purnavatara, or the Complete Incarnation.

KRISHNA IN THE PURANAS

Agni, Brahma, Padma, Brahma-Vaivarta, Vishnu and Bhagavata Puranas treat of the life of Krishna. The Brahma and Padma Puranas have devoted several chapters to this subject. Brahma Vaivarta, Vishnu, and Bhagavata Puranas have devoted whole sections and books to the description of Krishna Charita.

Radha plays an important part in the growth of later Vaishnavism. No mention of Radha is made in Vishnu and the Bhagavata Puranas. It is in the Padma as well as in the Brahma Vaivarta that a detailed account of the Radha cult, the real nature of Radha and Her companions, their names, their mystical significance, their relation with Sri Krishna in the Rasa Lila is given. In the Brahma Vaivarta Purana great importance to the Radha element in the Krishna worship is given. In the Vishnu and the Bhagavata Puranas the philosophical aspects of Sri Krishna and His worship are dealt with.

HIS LIFE

Lord Krishna was Lila Purushottama, the sportive form of God. He was a Yogeshwara. He was a Prema Murti. Lord Rama was a Maryada Purushottama. He was an ideal son, an ideal brother, an ideal husband, an ideal friend and an ideal king. He can be taken to embody all the highest ideals of man. He led an ideal life of a householder to teach humanity.

Krishna was a man of action. He was a history maker and righter of wrongs. He stood for justice and righteousness. His policy was to defend the oppressed from the oppressor. He was a master of super-physical powers. He was a man of knowledge and a world-teacher.He was a celestial musician. He was the Lord of Yogis. He was the friend of Arjuna and Uddhava. His immortal teachings to Arjuna and Uddhava on Yoga, Bhakti and Jnana are unique. Even now they stir the hearts of the readers and goad them towards the spiritual path and instil peace into their hearts.

Lord Krishna was the greatest Karma Yogin of all time. He held up the torch of wisdom. He was all embodiment of wisdom and selfless action. He combined in His life all that is best, highest, purest and the most beautiful, sublime and grand in heaven and earth. He was all love for the cowherd boys, cows, and Gopis. He was the friend and benefactor of the poor and the helpless. He was a versatile genius.

Krishna was the thunderbolt to the wrestlers assemble in the arena of Kamsa and yet he had the softest heart among men. He was Yama (Death) unto Kamsa, cupid unto Gopis, the object of constant meditation for Yogins and devotees, the form of bliss and beatitude to the sages and a child to his parents. He was Cupid unto Cupid himself *(Sakshat Manmatha-Manmatha)*.

Lord Krishna was an embodiment of humility though He was the Lord of the universe. He became the charioteer of Arjuna. He took upon Himself the duty of washing the feet of the visitors voluntarily at the time of the Rajasuya Yajna performed by Yudhishthira.

The Bhagavata Purana says that Sri Krishna lived for 125 years on earth (XI—vi. 25).

STUDENT LIFE

Sri Krishna received his instructions from Sandipani, a sage of Avantipura. He lived with His teacher like an ordinary student. He was meek, humble and obedient. He led a laborious life. He gathered fuel from the woods for His preceptor's household. He inspired His classmates with love. Sudama was Sri Krishna's classmate. Sudama was later on known by the name of Kuchela.

Sri Krishna had wonderful retentive memory. If he heard anything once, he would retain it in memory, however difficult it might be. He mastered the sixty-four arts in sixty-four days.

He was matchless in physical strength. He learnt the art of

archery and military science under His teacher. When his school career was over, at the request of His teacher, he rescued His teacher's son from Panchajanya, a sea-monster by whom He had been carried away. Krishna slew Panchajanya and took away his conch 'Panchajanya', rescued the boy from Yama, and handed him over to His teacher.

EMBODIMENT OF MERCY

Lord Krishna appeared as Para Brahman before the sages, as supreme Reality before the Yogis, as Lord of Beauty before the Gopis, as Warrior before the warriors, as a child before Vasudeva and Devaki, as the Lord of Death before Kamsa, as King of kings (Samrat) before the kings, according to the view and understanding of the seer or subject. The object is the same. It appears different according to the viewpoint of the beholder.

Lord Krishna is styled as one who steals butter, because he used to eat the butter stealthily in the houses of the Gopis on account of his extreme love for them. But he really steals the evil thoughts of devotees and fills their minds with divine thoughts. This stealing of butter was a sort of sport (Lila) when he was a boy, to instil delight in the hearts of Gopis who were his devotees. The Gopis liked this immensely. They were eagerly expecting Krishna to come and eat their butter. He really steals or captivates the hearts of His devotees, makes them forget the world, draws their minds towards His blessed feet and makes them enjoy everlasting peace and bliss. He steals the letter *"da"* in the feeling *"dasoham"* (I am servant) of devotees and make them feel the right significance of *"Soham"* ("I am He"), or their identity with the Supreme Self. Lord Krishna says in the Gita, "I give my devotees the Yoga of discrimination." (Chapter IX—10.) How merciful is Lord Krishna! Glory to Him and His name!!

He had the Bhava of mother even for Puthana who came to kill Him and gave her salvation. He gave salvation even to His

bitterest enemies, Kamsa and Sisupala who insulted Him openly in the Rajasuya Yajna. Then what to speak of those who are highly devoted to Him ?

Once Sri Krishna said to his wife Rukmini, "Princess, you have not done well in marrying me after rejecting the offers of great potentates and kings. I have no kingdom. I live out of fear in a city on the shore of the sea. My character and conduct is peculiar and not according to the general usage. Very few understand me. The wives of men like myself always meet with miseries. I love to associate with the poor and the fallen, and therefore the rich do not like to meet men like me. I have no attachment for wife, children, wealth, or luxury. Men like me live contented with their own selves. Therefore, O Princess of Vidarbha! You have made a mistake in marrying me."

This little speech will tell us the greatness of Lord Krishna. He was extremely kind and merciful towards the meek and the humble.

A GREAT WARRIOR

Lord Krishna was an undaunted warrior even from His twelfth year. He being annointed by Kubja and garlanded by Sudama, a flower-seller, entered the place of sacrifice in Dhanuryajna performed by Kamsa and broke the great bow. Kamsa sent an elephant named Kuvalayapeeda to kill Krishna. Krishna killed the elephant and entered the arena. Then he killed the chosen athletes of Kamsa, viz. Chanura and Toshalaka. Krishna got upon the platform on which Kamsa was seated, caught hold of his hair, threw him down on the ground and killed him.

Krishna fought bravely with Jarasandha, emperor of Magadha and Kalayavana. Jarasandha, father-in-law of Kamsa was very much enraged when Krishna killed Kamsa. He invaded Mathura seventeen times; Krishna drove out Jarasandha every time.

He fought with Bana, the thousand armed king of Sonitpur. Krishna's son Aniruddha had secretly married Bana's daughter Usha and was living with her. Bana was informed of this. He imprisoned Aniruddha. Krishna fought with Bana and cut off his arms and returned to Dwaraka with Aniruddha and Usha.

Thereafter He killed Paundra, king of Karusha who denied Krishna's divinity and assumed Vishnu's conch, discus, club, and lotus and declared Himself to be the real Vasudeva.

The wicked Sisupala challenged Krishna in Yudhishthira's Ṙajasuya Yajna. Sri Krishna threw His Chakra at Sisupala and cut off his head. Similarly he slew Dantavaktra also.

Salva, king of Saubha and a friend of Sisupala, waged war with Krishna to avenge his friend's death. Salva was put to death by Lord Krishna.

YOGESHWARA

You can even count the stars and the particles of sand in the seashore but it is not possible to count the marvellous and heroic deeds and glorious actions of Sri Krishna, the Lord of the three worlds.

When He was a child he did countless miracles. He showed Visvaroopa to His mother, Yasoda, in his mouth while he yawned. He uprooted the Yamala-Arjuna trees. He danced on the Kaliya serpent. He raised Govardhana hills on his little finger to protect Gokul from the heavy rains caused by Indra. He gave eyesight to the blind Bilwamangal. He gave unlimited cloth to Draupadi. He gave cosmic vision to Arjuna.

Sri Krishna ate a particle of vegetable that remained in the vessel of Draupadi, when Durvasa came to seek Yudhishthira's hospitality with a large number of followers, when Draupadi herself had finished her meal and there was nothing to place before the guests. He made them feel as if they had a most sumptuous meal when they were taking bath. They had to go back with their heads down with a sense of shame. He supplied

inexhaustible cloth to Draupadi, when she was being dragged in the court of Duryodhana. He held the Govardhana hill on His finger. He multiplied Himself and appeared in countless forms in Rasa Lila. He multiplied Himself into various forms, when Brahma kept the Gopas and calves away from Krishna's view. Can a human being do this? It is only a Yogeshwara who can perform these great miracles.

Who can describe the glory of Lord Krishna, the Lord of Yogis and the supreme Lord of the three worlds, the soul of the universe? Durvasa and countless disciples were satisfied, when Lord Krishna ate a small particle of vegetable. This itself clearly proves that Lord Krishna is the one Soul that dwells in all beings.

The sage Narada wished to find out how Krishna could lead a happy married life with his 16,000 wives. He visited their mansions and found Krishna in every one of their homes engaged in a variety of duties. What a great marvel! Narada was stunned. Does this not prove that Krishna is the Lord of Yogis and is Lord Hari Himself ?

Krishna is the Bhuta-Bharta (the Lord of all beings). He is in fact the husband of all women in this world. The real husband is the Lord only. It is to demonstrate this to the world that Lord Krishna incarnated Himself as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva.

A GREAT STATESMAN

Sri Krishna was a great statesman. The world has not witnessed a greater statesman than Sri Krishna. He was a companion of liberty and a peacemaker. He had wonderful foresight and held extremely liberal views. Even when He was a boy, He taught people the essentials and the true significance of religion, when He rose against the popular worship of Indra for getting rains.

Krishna was the greatest of the political heroes. He was the greatest statesman of all time. He was a king-maker. He was the

founder of the city of Dwaraka. He was a great historical person. He was the spiritual leader and saviour of mankind. He was the greatest of spiritual heroes.

He was appointed as the peace-maker to stop the civil war that was to be fought between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. Yudhishthira sent Krishna to negotiate with Kauravas. He made a long and wise exhortation to Duryodhana. The thrilling and soul-stirring speech delivered by Sri Krishna before the court of Dhritarashtra proves that He was the greatest statesman. He said to Duryodhana, "O Prince of the Bharata race! Make peace with the wise, brave and righteous Pandavas. Peace alone brings happiness to friends, relations and the whole world. He who does not act according to the wise instructions of his friends meet with destruction and sorrow."

Sri Krishna's political insight and wise statesmanship were admired by the ablest rulers of His time. His wise counsel was sought by kings and rulers!

HIS TEACHINGS

Just hear the most valuable instructions of Sri Krishna to Uddhava. Sri Krishna says: "Giving no attention to people who laugh in ridicule, forgetting the body and insensible to shame, one should fall prostrate on the ground and bow to all beings down even to the dog, the Chandala, the cow and the ass. See everything in Me and Me in everything. Surrender yourself unto Me. Do all actions for My sake. Cut off all sorts of attachments. Have perfect unswerving devotion to Me. Sing my glories."

Gita teachings are Karma Pradhana. Lord Krishna has laid great stress on the importance of Nishkama Karma whereas His teachings to Uddhava are Bhakti Pradhana. He has emphasised much on the importance of Bhakti to Uddhava. In Gita also the Lord has laid great importance on self-surrender in the last

chapter *"Sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam vraja."*

CALL OF THE FLUTE

The flute is the symbol of Pranava. It is this flute that attracted the devoted Gopis, the maidens of Vraja to meet their beloved Lord on the banks of the sacred Yamuna. The divine melody of the flute was enchanting. It had wonderful power. When it entered the core of the heart through the cavity of the ears, it made the hearer forget all his dear relations, the world, and even his own self. It made the hearer dance in ecstasy and filled his heart with pure love. The sound of this divine flute thrilled the heart with rapturous delight and instilled new life and joy. It produced God-intoxication in all beings and infused life even in insentient objects. The sweetness of the music was unsurpassed. He who heard once the music of Krishna's flute, cared not for the nectar of Heaven or the bliss of Moksha.

The flute and its music had stirred the souls of the Gopis. They were not masters of themselves. The world was nothing to them. They felt irresistably drawn towards Sri Krishna. They had neither shame nor fear in leaving their homes. There was a soul-awakening in them. Their mind was not of this world. Their husbands and brothers stopped them in vain. Who can resist the torrent of divine love for the Lord?

The love that the Gopis bore towards Krishna was a divine love. It was the union of souls. It is no union of sexes. It is the aspiration of the Jivatma to merge in Paramatma. It is the blending of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul.

The Gopis were the sages of Dandaka forest in their previous births. They wished to embrace Lord Rama. They were promised satisfaction in the later Avatara. They got blended into the Paramatma in the Krishna Avatara.

O Lord Krishna! O Master-musician of the three worlds! Will you not play once again the same flute at this critical

juncture, when there is chaos everywhere and infuse new life of divine love and joy?

O Lord! Let us hear once more that alluring music of the flute which stilled and calmed the vibrations and agitations of animated creatures, that divine melody which moved inanimate objects, that celestial music which brought to the banks of Yamuna the flying birds, wandering cows, roaming deer and made them gaze at Thee, forgetful of themselves.

ORIGIN OF BHAGAVATA

Sri Vyasa was meditating on the sacred banks of the Saraswati. His heart was in a disturbed condition. He had no satisfaction and peace. He reflected within himself, "I have observed strict Brahmacharya. I have paid due regard to the study of the Vedas, to the worship of preceptors and sacred fires. I have obeyed the commands of my preceptors. I have explained the meaning of the Vedas in the form of the Mahabharata wherein Dharmas and other things can be clearly understood by women, Sudras and others. Still I think my work is not fully done."

At this juncture Narada appeared before Sri Vyasa. Narada said, "You have fully known all that is knowable, You have written the excellent Mahabharata which contains everything, How is it you feel uneasy and dissatisfied?"

Sri Vyasa said, "I quite agree with what you say. Still I have no satisfaction. I want to know the cause of it from you. You are born of Brahma and you possess infinite knowledge."

Narada said: "O great Muni! Thou hast treated of Dharma and other things but thou hast not recited the glory of Vasudeva. For this reason, I think, the Lord is not satisfied. Therefore, O blessed one! write about the various glorious deeds of Lord Krishna, so that all people may obtain the final emancipation by knowing them. This universe is also an aspect of Bhagavan, because its creation, preservation and dissolution proceed from

Him. Thou knowest all this thyself. But thou hast shown to others only a portion of this Truth. Therefore, O sage, sing the glory of the Omnipresent Hari, by knowing which even the wise reach the end of their quest. The wise know this alone and no other to be the remedy for the miseries of beings that are repeatedly tossed in Samsara." Thereupon Sri Vyasa wrote Srimad Bhagavata and attained perfect peace of mind. He taught it to his son, Suka.

THE BHAGAVAT PURANA

The Puranas hold a unique place in the history of religious literature of the Hindus. They contain mine of knowledge and information on all philosophical and religious topics. Srutis or Vedas cannot be easily understood by the common people. So the all-merciful Vedavyasa composed the eighteen Puranas for the benefit of mankind and explained in an easy way the subtle truth and the deep problems of the Srutis. They are indeed an encyclopaedia of Hindu religion and ethics.

The Puranas contain fables, fairytales, philosophy, religion, myth and legend. A Western reader can hardly appreciate the teaching and value of our Puranas unless he is conversant with the methods employed by the Indian Rishis in inculcating the truths of philosophy and religion. The task of the Purana is to popularise the Vedic truths by means of narratives, stories and anecdotes.

Bhagavata is a practical guide for all. It teaches that God-realisation alone can give salvation for man, and shows the ways to attain God-consciousness. It teaches that God alone really exists and that God-realisation is the be-all and end-all of life. It teaches us to realise God everywhere and always and in every situation of life. It is indeed a wonderful book. It is a great treasure for man.

Bhagavata is the solace of life. It is unique in its beauty and charm, in its diction and philosophy. It is a valuable

treasure-house of divine knowledge. A study of this book inspires devotion, instils knowledge and Vairagya. The glories of Lord Vasudeva are vividly described in this book.

The author of this book is the great Vyasa. He taught this to his son, Suka. There are many commentaries on this book. Sridhara Swami's commentary is the most famous and authoritative one.

The Bhagavata is the most popular and the exalted of all Puranas. It is held in the highest esteem by theVaishnavas in all parts of India. It is a monumental work amongst the devotional works which are the pride and glory of the Sanskrit literature. Vyasa himself says that Srimad Bhagavata is the quintessence of that gigantic work Mahabharata and it is the ripe fruit of the whole Vedic literature.

It is the most favourite book with preachers and religious teachers. The book is worshipped in all Hindu houses. It is recited all over India by learned Pundits, Sadhus and Sannyasins.

Jnana, Bhakti and Karma are assigned their respective places in this book. Karma is prescribed for those who are very much attached to the body and this world. Jnana is prescribed for those who are detached and dispassionate (Virakta). Bhakti is prescribed for those who are neither very much attached nor very much detached and who are indifferent. It teaches all about Bhagavata Dharma or the religion of love.

All that is noble and inspiring in Hindu religion, philosophy and culture is found in Bhagavata. The highest truths of religion and philosophy and the highest principles of ethics are beautifully explained in this marvellous and unique book.

Attractive stories are a means employed by the Hindu Rishis and sages for teaching morality, philosophy and religion. The author of the Bhagavata has taken recourse to this method.

The stories and anecdotes goad and lure the mind to the truths of religion. They are like sugar-coated tablets. They serve the purpose of entertaining the people of undeveloped minds.

Translation of this great book into a foreign language can never bring the charm and beauty of the original, however erudite, skilful and powerful the translator may be.

The Bhagavata consists of eighteen thousand slokas, three hundred and thirty-two chapters and twelve Skandhas. The book is named Bhagavata because it speaks of the glory of Bhagavan or Vishnu. It is one of the most authoritative of Hindu scriptures. It is a work of great repute in India. It exercises a direct and powerful influence on the opinions and feelings of the people. It has acquired a wonderful hold on the minds of Hindus. It contains the essence of all the Puranas.

In Bhagavata Purana alone the history of the universe is systematically dealt with.

Lord Krishna is the central figure of this unique book. It is an authoritative book on devotion. Bhagavata teaches devotion that is associated with Jnana (Bhaktiyukta-Jnana). It does not divorce knowledge from Bhakti. It teaches that Jnana is extremely helpful to its perfect attainment. In Bhagavata the treacle of Bhakti is mixed with the elixir of Jnana.

The teachings given by Lord Krishna to Uddhava on the eve of His departure from this world, are wonderful. These are contained in the eleventh Skandha. Sri Krishna clears all the doubts of Uddhava, His friend, foremost disciple and the chief of the Yadavas. He gives instructions on a variety of subjects. But the one ringing note is: "See Me in everything. Surrender yourself to Me. Do all actions for my sake. Cut off all sorts of attachments. Have perfect unswerving devotion to Me. Sing my glories."

The Bhagavata Dharma as taught by the nine sages to King Nimi in the beginning of the eleventh Skandha, is thrilling and

soul-stirring. The tenth Skandha contains all the Lilas of the Lord. The youthful sports and pastimes, the funs and frolics of the divine child Sri Krishna, Kumara Lilas, Brindavan Lilas, Mathura Lilas, Dwaraka Lilas, Kurukshetra Lilas and Prabhasa Lilas are described in this Skandha. It contains 90 chapters.

The tenth Skandha cannot be understood by those whose hearts are filled with passion and lustful tendencies. The aspect of lover and beloved found in every religion cannot be comprehended by people who are immersed in worldliness. The tenth Skandha contains the outpourings of the heart or the expressions of rapturous love of the human soul when it is freed from the impurities of the mind. When the impurities of the mind are removed, and the heart is thoroughly purified, the human soul is naturally drawn or attracted towards the Lord and is finally absorbed in Him.

The Bhagavata prescribes various kinds of meditation to suit different types of aspirants. A beginner asked to meditate on the Virat Purusha. He must think that the whole universe is the body of the Lord. This is given in the second Skandha. In the same Skandha and in the third also, meditation on the form of the Lord in the heart, and on His various limbs beginning from the feet, is described. In the eleventh Skandha meditation on the lotus of the heart with three layers, Agni as the first, Surya as the second, and Moon as the third, one over the other, is prescribed. In the same Skandha one is asked to meditate on the form of Lord Krishna first, and then to fix the mind on ether or the supreme cause, and finally to merge it in the Para Brahman.

Bhagavata Saptahas are held throughout India. The whole Bhagavata is recited within seven days. This provides a good occasion for listening to and understanding the whole of Bhagavata. You should conduct Saptaha in your house once every year. This will contribute to your happiness and prosperity. Every one of you should have a copy of the Bhagavata in your house.

END OF PARIKSHIT

Once upon a time Parikshit went on a hunting excursion. He got fatigued and felt intense thirst. So he entered the cottage of the sage Samika. The sage was absorbed in meditation and so he was not aware of the presence of the king. Parikshit was very much annoyed that the sage did not treat him with hospitality. Further, he was very much tormented by hunger and thirst. He thought, "This sage is pretending to be absorbed in contemplation in order to avoid the usual courtesies and the ordinary hospitality due to me. He is showing his contempt to me." Then he picked up with the edge of his bow the carcass of a serpent, threw it as a garland over the neck of the sage and walked away.

The youthful son of the sage, Sringi, who was playing on the bank of the adjoining river with other boys, came to know from some playmate that King Parikshit had put a dead serpent over the neck of his father. He cursed the king and said that the serpent Takshaka should bite him on the seventh day therefrom, for his mischievous and indecent act. The boy then ran to the cottage and saw the serpent on the neck of his father and cried bitterly. The sage was roused by the commotion set up by his son. He opened his eyes, threw off the dead snake and asked the boy the cause for his lamentation. The boy told him all that had happened.

The sage was very much afflicted at his curse and said, "O my son, you have been very ignorant and rash. Kings are the embodiment of Lord Vishnu on earth. They protect their subjects through their power, justice, and prestige and maintain law and order. If there is no king, there will be anarchy in the land. His duties are difficult and arduous. He has serious responsibilities. If the king punishes you as you deserve, you may be at least purified of the sin caused by your curse. But King Parikshit is a great devotee. He will never retaliate. He will accept your curse thankfully as an expiation for his thoughtlessness. Further he is not to be blamed at all. I have

failed in my duty as a subject, in not giving him the respect due to his rank and position. I have failed in my duty as a host, in not giving him food and water. He did not deserve at all a curse from you. May God forgive you for the sin you have committed in your ignorance."

Then the sage sent his disciple to the king informing him of his son's folly and entreated him to take the necessary precautions to guard his precious life.

King Parikshit reached his palace, and rested himself for some time. He repented very much for his foolish and rash action. The disciple of the sage came to him with the message. The king felt intensely relieved in mind. He accepted the curse as an atonement and a blessing in disguise.

He reflected within himself, "I lost my understanding and sense of right and wrong on account my wealth and position. I was puffed up with pride. I have become more wise now. I have developed Vairagya. The curse will expiate my sinful act towards a great sage. It gives me time to fix my mind on Lord Krishna, whose friendship alone can bestow eternal bliss."

Thus saying, King Parikshit entrusted his kingdom to his son and sat on the sacred banks of the Ganga with a strong determination not to rise from there till his mind was absorbed in Lord Krishna and his mortal coil was thrown away.

The news reached the ears of the Rishis. They all assembled to witness the devotion of the mighty king. The king welcomed them with folded hands and asked their advice as to how he could best utilise his time in the service of Lord Krishna. Various Rishis prescribed various methods. At this moment Suka arrived, King Parikshit repeated his question to the sage.

Suka replied, "Lord Krishna should always be thought of. His name should always be on your lips. His Lilas and qualities should always be heard and meditated upon. His presence should always be felt by you. This is the only best way of

utilising your time and remembering Him at the time of death which will lead to eternal bliss.

"Do not think, O great King Parikshit, that you have only a short week before you. Rajarshi Khatwanga rendered great help to the Devas in battle. The Devas told him to ask for a boon in return for his services. Khatwanga asked the Devas to tell him how much unexpired time there was in his lease of life for him to enjoy the boon which he earned. He was told that he had only one Muhurta (one hour) before him. He desired that he might attain union immediately with the Lord. The Devas said, 'Be it so.' He concentrated his mind on the Lord with great devotion and attained eternal bliss."

Suka continued, "Therefore, O King, fix your mind with intense devotion on the Lord. Do not think of the things of this world. Listen to the glories of Lord Krishna and His manifold Lilas. These are summed up in the Bhagavata which I learnt from my father Sri Vyasa."

Thereupon Suka recited Bhagavata to King Parikshit. King Parikshit heard it with intense devotion and concentration, fixed his mind on the Lord and attained union with Him.

THE FATE OF NON-BELIEVERS

Some ignorant and thoughtless people say that Lord Krishna is an ordinary man only, with some good qualities. They say that he has come from lower stages. Some find fault with his life and character. They say: "Krishna is not the Lord. He is not an Avatara. He is a passionate cowherd who lustfully played with the Gopis."

Those who find fault with the Lord have no idea of His greatness and glory, as they have not practised Yoga, as their faults have not been purged by the practice of Yama and Niyama, and as they have not taken recourse to Satsanga with sages. They have no real insight into Adhyatmic science.

Can there be a tinge of passion in the Lord? Was He not a

boy of seven years at the time of Rasa Lila? Who can understand the secret of Rasa Lila and Madhurya Bhava, the culmination of highest Bhakti, Atmanivedan or total surrender to the Lord? It is only Narada, Suka Deva, Chaitanya, Mira, Ramananda or the Gopis that could understand the secret of Rasa Lila. Did he not multiply as countless Krishnas? Can a human being perform this miraculous deed?

Just listen to what Sri Swami Madhusudan Saraswati, a Yogi of highest realisation says: "I know not anything higher than the lotus-eyed Krishna with hands adorned with flute, looking like a heavy-laden cloud with His face shining like the full moon. Let the Yogis, with their mind controlled by the practice of meditation, visualise that Nirguna, actionless, indescribable and supreme Jyoti, if they want; but for us, that blue-shining figure that moves here and there on the banks of the Kaalindi river, ever comes before our eyes."

What is the fate of such people who cavil and carp against the Lord? Just listen, "Those devoid of reason think of Me as an ordinary human being having taken a body from the un-manifested state on account of Prarabdha. They know not My supreme nature, imperishable, most excellent (Gita chapter VII—24). The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of beings. Empty of hope, empty of deeds, empty of wisdom, senseless, they verily are possessed of the deceitful, brutal, demoniacal nature (IX—11-12). They enwrapped in darkness, think wrong to be right and see things in a perverted light. These men know neither action nor renunciation, neither purity nor right conduct, neither truth nor uprightness. They do not know what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Deluded birth after birth, they wander in the worldly mire of Samsara, suffering innumerable ills and miseries, and never attain salvation."

EPILOGUE

It is very difficult for busy people to go through the whole book of Bhagavata. Therefore, I have condensed Sri Krishna's life, Lilas and Teachings in this book in a most palatable and tasteful form. Even if you study one or two pages daily, you will develop devotion towards the Lord and attain eternal peace, bliss and immortality.

May you all drink the nectar of Bhagavata! May you all be endowed with faith and devotion to the Lord! May you all lead a life of purity and righteousness! May Lord Krishna be your centre, ideal and goal! May His blessings be upon you all! May the truths of Bhagavata be revealed unto you all, like the Amalaka fruit in hand, through the grace of Sri Krishna! Glory to Sri Vyasa and to Sri Suka!

May Lord Krishna, the joy of Devaki, the very life of Radha, the indweller of our hearts, the beloved of the Gopis protect and guide you all! May you all hear once more His sweet flute, the celestial music of the soul! May He become the charioteer of this body! May you all abide in Him for ever and enjoy the eternal bliss and supreme Peace!!

Ananda Kutir,
RISHIKESH
7th April, 1943

Sivananda

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Part I

LILAS

LORD KRISHNA

Hari Om!

Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya!

Salutations to Sri Krishna, the Lord of Gopis, the charioteer of Arjuna, the destroyer of sins, the teacher of mankind, Lord of Lakshmi, beloved of Rukmini, Radha and Satyabhama, who is an embodiment of Bliss, who is the Universe itself and who bore the Govardhana hill on the tip of His little finger.

Bhudevi was very much oppressed by the burden of several Asuras in the form of haughty kings. Therefore she sought refuge in Brahma. Brahma said, "Lord Narayana is going to incarnate in the house of Vasudeva as Krishna. Adisesha will be born as his elder brother to do service to Him. The celestial women also will be born in the world to serve Him. The sages will take the form of cows. You will not be troubled any more. Lord Krishna will punish the wicked and establish Dharma."

Kamsa imprisoned his father Ugrasena, the king of the Yadus, the Bhojas and the Andhakas. He himself reigned over the kingdom. He with the support of Jarasandha, the Magadha king, his father-in-law, oppressed the Yadus. The demon chiefs Baka, Chanura, Dhenuka, Putana, Kesi, Bana, Bhauma, Pralamba, Trinavarta, Mahasena, Mushtika, Arishta and Dvivida also helped Kamsa.

In the city of Mathura a king named Surasena reigned over the kingdom of Surasena. He was the chief of the Yadus. On one occasion in that city, Vasudeva, the son of Sura, ascended his

chariot as bridegroom with his bride Devaki. For the procession, Kamsa the son of Ugrasena and brother of Devaki drove the chariot to please his sister.

On the way an aerial voice said to Kamsa, "Oh fool! The eighth child of Devaki, your sister whom you are taking, will kill you." At once the wicked Kamsa caught his sister by the hair and tried to kill her with the sword in his hand. Vasudeva pacified Kamsa and spoke to him in sweet words, "O Kamsa! You are praised by the warriors. You will have to bring glory to the Bhojas. You are a great hero. How can you kill a woman and that too your sister, during the marriage occasion. This is not a proper act. This will bring great disgrace and sin on you. Be not afraid of the aerial voice. I will surrender to you all the children from whom the fear arises."

Kamsa desisted from his wicked act. Vasudeva praised him and reached his palace.

The six children of Devaki were killed by Kamsa. Kamsa put fetters for Devaki and Vasudeva. The seventh conception was that of a ray of Ananta. This was the boy Sankarshana, so called from his being drawn away from Devaki's womb.

The Lord ordered Yoga Maya, His own Sakti and said, "O blessed Devi! Go to the hamlet Vraja in Nanda Gokula. There lives Rohini, the wife of Vasudeva. There is Adisesha my own Amsa (partial Avatara) in Devaki's womb. Take him away and place him in Rohini's womb. I will be born as the son of Devaki. You must be born in the womb of Yasoda, the wife of Nanda."

Yoga Maya agreed and went to the earth and acted accordingly. The all-pervading Lord entered the mind of Vasudeva in full form. Devaki shone with the holy spirit of the universal Lord imparted mentally by Vasudeva. Vasudeva and Devaki did severe penance in their former lives to have Krishna as their child.

Kamsa was more watchful at the eighth time. He kept Devaki and Vasudeva under close custody. Krishna was born in the prison house.

Kamsa saw divine splendour in the face of his sister, as she was filled with the holy presence of the Lord. He thought within himself: "Hari, the destroyer of my life has already entered her. What could I do now in this emergency? The great Lord will surely fulfil his resolve. The murder of a woman and that too of a sister in confinement, will certainly destroy my fame, prosperity and life." He desisted from his fierce resolve of killing his sister. He harboured intense hatred for the Lord. While sitting or lying down or standing or eating or walking or drinking, his mind was on the Lord. He saw the whole world as pervaded by the Lord. He developed devotion through hatred (Vaira Bhakti).

Brahma with Rudra, and Rishis like Narada, and Devas came and praised the God in the womb, "O Hari! By Thy Avatara the burden of this Bhudevi is removed. O Blessed Mother Devaki! the supreme Lord has incarnated in you for our glory and well-being and the welfare of this world at large. Your son will become a Saviour. Kamsa will be destroyed soon. Fear not."

BIRTH OF LORD KRISHNA

Then the auspicious hour came. The star Rohini was shining. It was Vijaya Muhurta. The elements were extremely pleasant at the birth of Krishna. Winds were blowing auspiciously. The stars were shining with lustre. The lakes were filled with lotuses. Lord Krishna incarnated at midnight on this earth. The gods played divine music. The Kinnaras and Gandharvas sang. Siddhas and Charanas praised. The Vidyadharas (various grades of celestial beings) danced along with Apsaras, sages and Devas. There was a rain of flowers from the heavens in joy.

Vishnu incarnated with lotus eyes, with four hands, armed with conch, disc, mace and lotus, with the diamond Kausthuba, with the mark Srivatsa adorning the chest, wearing silk Pitambara, with ear ornaments made of diamonds, with the crown made of several emeralds, with bracelets in the lower and

upper arms and valuable waist-string. Vasudeva saw this marvel of a divine child.

Vasudeva praised Him, "Thou art known to me already as the Supreme Being. Thou art an embodiment of knowledge and bliss. Thou art seated in the hearts of all beings. Thou art the witness of the minds of all. Thou art beyond Maya and Avidya."

Devaki beheld marks of Vishnu on her son and praised Him, "Thou art beginningless, Omnipresent, self-luminous, attributeless, changeless and actionless. Thou art the source and place of dissolution for everything. Kindly do not show me this form with four hands. Let me see you as an ordinary child. Withdraw this divine transcendental form. We are afraid of Kamsa."

The Lord said, "Let both of you often meditate with love on Me as a son and as the Supreme Being as you will obtain eternal bliss and immortality."

The Lord assumed the form of a handsome baby through the power of his own Maya. The Lord said, "If you are afraid of Kamsa, then take me to Gokula and bring my Maya that is born there of Yasoda immediately." Vasudeva took the baby and came out. The sentries became stupefied under the influence of Lord's Maya and the people were all asleep. The doors which were locked, opened of their own accord. There was gentle rain. Adisesha spread forth his hoods like an umbrella to ward off rain. The deep Yamuna which was in floods with strong currents, made way for Vasudeva.

Vasudeva placed the child near the bed of Yasoda and took the female baby from there; he returned back to his prison-house and placed this Maya child near Devaki and put on his fetters as before on his legs.

The sentries ran and told Kamsa of the birth of the child for Devaki. Kamsa soon got up from his bed, repaired to the place where Devaki was confined, and entered the room in which she was lying. The helpless Devaki told Kamsa, "O Kamsa! This child is your niece. It is not proper for you to kill a female

child." Kamsa threatened his sister and seized the child by her hands and dashed it on a stone.

The child slipped from his hands and rose high up into the sky. It was seen as the sister of Vishnu with eight hands. She was wearing the divine garland and robes and ornaments and adorned with the bow, trident, knife, conch, disc and mace. She was praised by the Siddhas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras.

She said, "O fool! What benefit are you going to derive by killing me? He who is going to take your life is born elsewhere. He is your old enemy. Do not hurt in vain these helpless persons, Devaki, Vasudeva and other children.

Kamsa was struck with wonder when he heard the words of the child. He released Devaki and Vasudeva and told them in humility, "O blessed souls! Though I have killed your children, do not be afflicted at heart. People reap the fruits of their Karmas in spite of themselves. I do not know what fate awaits me after death." He released them from their fetters.

Kamsa called his counsellors and told them all that Goddess Maya had spoken. The Ministers said, "If it be so, O king of Bhoja, we will kill all children whether ten days old or not, whether found in towns, villages or pastime grounds. Vishnu is the root of the Devas. The roots of Dharma are the Vedas, cows, the Brahmanas, Tapas and Yajna. Therefore by all means we shall kill the Veda-knowing, Yajna-performing and ascetic Brahmanas, and cows that supply the sacrificial ghee. Brahmanas, Vedas, asceticism, truth, restraint of the senses, restraint of the mind, faith, kindness, forbearance and sacrifices—these are the parts of the body of Vishnu. Therefore the best way to kill him is to kill these."

Kamsa ordered the demons to do havoc in all places and repaired to his palace.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

On the birth of his son, Nanda became very happy. At Gokula, Nanda performed the birth ceremony of his son with great pomp. He invited Veda-knowing Brahmins and performed

the natal sacrament and worship of the ancestors and Gods in the prescribed manner. His gifts knew no bounds. The Brahmanas uttered their blessings. The musicians and bards sang. The houses of Vraja were decorated with flags and festoons. The houses were swept well and sprinkled with fragrant water. The Gopas put on valuable clothes, coats and turbans, and assembled in Nanda's house with various presents in their hands.

The Gopis mixed saffron powder and oil and applied it to the child and sang delightful songs about the child, blessing him with long life. They decorated themselves with dress, ornaments and collyrium. They sprinkled each other with water mixed with turmeric powder. From that very day, the Vrajas of Nanda reached the height of prosperity in every respect.

PUTANA'S DELIVERANCE

By Kamsa's orders, the fierce demoness Putana went about killing children in towns, villages and pasture lands. Her only occupation was to kill babies. She had the power to move in air and assume any form she liked. This wanderer of the skies entered Gokula at will and assumed the form of a handsome woman. She entered the house of Nanda and saw the divine child in the cradle, the death to the wicked, with latent prowess and splendour, like fire submerged in ash. The cruel Putana took the babe on her lap and suckled it with her breasts containing poison. The Lord squeezed her breasts by his hands and sucked through them her vital breath. She screamed forth, "Let go. Let go. No more." Her eyes bulged out. At last she fell dead like a great mountain.

The Gopis with Rohini and Yasoda came rushing to the spot and took up the child, which was playing fearlessly on the body of Putana who was freed from her sins as she suckled the Lord. The smoke that arose out of her burning body was fragrant, like that of sandal wood, as the touch of Sri Krishna's body purifies even the enemy. Putana became the fostermother

of the Lord, although she had the evil intention of killing the child.

OVERTURNING OF THE CART

The ceremony observed on the child being able to stand on his legs, and the birthday ceremony were observed together. There was a great feast at the house of Nanda. After completion of the bath, Yasoda found that her child closed His eyes in sleep and so she put Him to bed under a cart which contained vessels full of milk and curd. After some time, the child opened His eyes and cried for His milk. As Yasoda was busily engaged in receiving her guests, she did not hear Sri Krishna's cry. He then kicked the cart with His feet. The cart was upset, the vessels were broken, the wheel and axle were upturned, and the yoke was shattered. The Gopis and Gopas were struck with wonder. They could not account for this wonderful phenomenon. The boys who were playing there told the Gopas and the Gopis, that the child Krishna while crying had overturned the cart by His kicks, but the latter could not easily believe what they said. They did not realise the immeasurable strength of that child.

THE KILLING OF TRINAVARTA

One day Yasoda was fondling the child on her lap. Suddenly Krishna became very heavy like a rock. She was not able to bear the weight of the child and so she left the child on the ground and proceeded to do some household work. A demon Trinavarta by name, a servant of Kamsa, carried away the child in the form of a whirlwind at the instigation of Kamsa.

The whole Gokula was wrapt in dust and darkness for sometime. The demon reached the sky but he was not able to proceed further on account of the heaviness of Krishna. The child gripped his neck tightly and the demon was strangled. He became powerless and could not throw down the wonder-child. His eyeballs protruded. He fell breathless from the sky with all his limbs shattered on the stones below. The Gopis and the Gopas saw Krishna lying unscathed and happy on the chest of

the dead Asura and became immensely happy. They restored the child to Yasoda.

SHOWING COSMIC VISION TO YASODA

One day Yasoda took her child on her lap and suckled Him. She kissed her son again and again. Just at that time the child yawned. When he opened His mouth, the mother saw the whole universe within it. She saw the sky, the space between the earth and the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the four quarters, fire, air, oceans, continents, mountains, rivers, forests, islands, and all things in the universe, animate and inanimate.

Yasoda who saw the whole universe within the mouth of her own son, shuddered and closed her eyes immediately in great fear. She was struck with wonder.

NAMING CEREMONY

Gargacharya was the family priest of the Yadus. He came to Vraja, Nanda's Gokula, one day at the request of Vasudeva. Nanda duly received him and said, "You are versed in the Vedas. The science of astrology has been propounded by you. Please perform the naming ceremony of these two boys." Garga replied, "I am known as the priest of the Yadus. If I conduct the naming ceremony of your son, Kamsa might suspect your son to be the eighth son of Devaki." Nanda promised strict privacy. Garga performed the ceremony in a quiet and unfrequented place.

Garga said, "The son of Rohini shall be called Rama or the charming one, as he will charm his friends and relatives by his virtues. He will be called by the name 'Balarama' on account of his infinite strength. This will be second name. He will bring together all the Yadus and remove all differences, and so he will be called by the name 'Sankarshana'. This dark complexioned child assumes the human form in every Yuga. He has already appeared in three colours, white (Sukla), red (Rakta) and yellow (Pita). Now he has got the black colour. Therefore his name will be Krishna. Your son has very many names and forms. He will bring you prosperity and delight. He will protect you against all

dangers. You will thoroughly triumph over all difficulties. He will bring extreme delight to all Gopas, cows and Gokula as well. O Nanda! Your son is equal to the Lord Narayana by his Guna, form, fame, grandeur and powers."

SPORTS OF THE CHILD

(*Bala Lila*)

Krishna became very naughty. He would untie the calves of the Gopis before the milking time. He would steal their milk, butter and curds and divide the remnants after eating among the monkeys and break the pots, if they did not eat. He made holes in the pots hanging in the tripod, to find out their contents; and after knowing the contents through the hole, he would place a mortar below and mount on it to reach them, if the pots were out of reach. He would illumine the dark room by the glitter of his own body and the jewels, to serve his purpose.

Once a Gopi took hold of Krishna by the hand and went to inform his mother about His mischief. Krishna miraculously escaped from her hand. She found the missing child near His mother. She felt abashed and returned to her house.

One day Balarama and the other boys complained to Yasoda that Krishna had eaten earth. Yasoda got afraid that this might affect Sri Krishna's health. She rebuked Krishna, "O my naughty child! Why did you eat earth in secret?" Sri Krishna replied, "O mother! I did not eat earth. These boys have told a lie. Examine my mouth." Yasoda said, "Open your mouth, my child!" Sri Krishna opened His mouth. Therein she saw the whole universe of animate and inanimate things, the sky, the cardinal points, the mountains, continents, seas, the whole earth, air, fire, the sun, the moon and the stars, the seven Dvipas, the planets, the Devas, the mind, the senses, the three Gunas and their modifications, the Jiva, time primordial matter, Karma and its seeds, even Brindavan and herself. She was amazed, and began to reflect thus, "Is this a dream or a strange vision of God's illusion or does my child possess any inborn Yogic powers?" She said, "Salutations to the Lord, I take shelter under

Him whose Maya produces the wrong notions—This is Nanda, my husband. This is my son. I am Yasoda. This is mine." She had the true knowledge, but she lost her memory of the vision by the Yoga Maya of the Lord. She again knew Krishna to be her own son and placed him on her lap.

TYING OF KRISHNA

One day Yasoda was churning the curd herself and singing the deeds of her son. Krishna came to His mother and wanted to be suckled. He took hold of the churning rod and stopped her churning. Yasoda placed Him on her lap and suckled her darling from her breasts. The milk that was boiling on the oven overflowed the pot. She put her son down when He was yet unsatisfied and went away in haste to remove the pot. Krishna became very angry. He bit his lips, broke the milk-pot with a stone. He went to another room and began to eat butter stealthily.

Yasoda came back after a short time and found the pot of curd broken to pieces. Krishna had already left the place. Yasoda at once guessed that it was her son's doing. She found Krishna standing on an overturned husking-stand freely dividing the contents of the hanging pots among the monkeys. Yasoda quietly approached Him with a stick. Krishna got down in haste from the husking-stand and ran away as if in fear. Yasoda ran after Him and caught Him at last. She threw away the stick and tried to tie Him to the husking-stand with a cord; but when she began to bind Him the cord was found to be short by a few inches. She brought another piece of cord and joined it to the original one. When this also proved to be too short, she added another piece again. With every other piece she added, the rope was still short by a few inches. She got amazed.

Krishna found out that His mother was thoroughly exhausted and her body was bathed in sweat. He took pity on her and allowed Himself to be bound to the husking-stand.

THE YAMALA-ARJUNA TREES

Yasoda was engrossed in her household duties. Sri Krishna

thought of liberating the two Arjuna trees who had been sons of Kubera in their previous life, Nala Kubara and Manigreeva by name. They were endowed with immense wealth, beauty and splendour; but, on account of their pride, they had been turned into trees, by Narada's curse.

The two sons of Kubera were playing with Gandharva girls in a river, in a naked state. Narada happened to pass that way. The celestial damsels felt ashamed at their nudity and at once put on their clothes, as they were afraid of the curse by the Rishi. But the two Yakshas did not care to do so. Hence Narada gave a curse, "These two sons of Kubera are extremely ignorant and insolent. Let them become trees. But, they shall not lose memory by my favour. After one hundred Deva years, the touch of Sri Krishn shall save them." These sons of Kubera became a pair of Arjuna trees in Brindavan.

Sri Krishna approached the trees, Yamala and Arjuna, drawing the husking-stand behind him by force. He placed Himself between the trees and uprooted them. They fell down with a terrible crash. Two Siddhas came out of the trees and illuminated the place with their lustre. They praised Lord Krishna and then rose upwards.

Hearing the terrible noise, the Gopas and Gopis came to the spot: They all saw the two Arjuna trees fallen to the ground. The boys told them what they had seen. They said, "This is all Krishna's doing. He gave a pull and the two trees fell down with a crash. We further saw two persons coming out of the trees." But the Gopas and the Gopis could not believe what the boys said. They thought that it was not possible for the small child to uproot the two trees, and they were wonder-struck.

THE FRUIT SELLER

One day Krishna heard a woman shouting, "O people! Purchase fruits." He quickly took a handful of grain and hastened to her side to get some fruits, though He is the Lord who confers all fruits of all works and worship. The woman filled both His hands with fruits and in return took the grain and

put it in her basket. Her basket became full of gems and precious stones.

BRINDAVAN

A Gopa, Upananda by name, who was a wise man said to the Gopas, "It is not safe now to dwell any more in Gokul. Many portents have occurred here. This place has become unsafe for our children. This child Krishna was saved with great difficulty from Putana. Through the grace of Hari the cart did not fall on him. He was carried up into the clouds by the Asura. He fell on a rock and was protected by the great gods. Achyuta only protected him when the trees fell down. Let us take our children and go to Brindavan this very day with our attendants and followers. That only is a fit place for our cattle, Gopis and Gopas. There are lovely hills, pasture lands, fresh verdure, herbs and plants."

The Gopas unanimously expressed their approval and said, "That is good. That is good. Well said. Well said." They all proceeded to Brindavan. Balarama and Krishna saw Govardhana, Brindavan and the banks of the Yamuna and became immensely delighted. They tended the calves in the company of Gopa boys. They played with other boys as ordinary children.

DELIVERANCE FROM VATSASURA

Once Krishna and Balarama were playing with other cowherd boys and tending the calves on the bank of the Yamuna. An Asura assumed the form of a calf and got mixed among the herd. He had the evil intention of killing Krishna and Balarama. Krishna discovered the Asura in the form of a calf in the midst of his calves and pointed him out to Balarama. Then He silently approached the demon. He caught him by the hind legs and tail and whirled him round and round his head and struck him against a tree. The Asura died. The cowherd boys praised Sri Krishna and shouted, "Well done, well done." The Devas showered flowers on Sri Krishna.

DELIVERANCE FROM BAKASURA

One day the cowherd boys went to a tank to drink water. They saw a huge monster or Asura in the form of a Baka (crane), who was a friend of Kamsa. The Asura suddenly rushed at Sri Krishna to strike Him with his hard beak. Sri Krishna held the two beaks apart and tore them asunder like a blade of grass. The Asura died. The gods rained flowers on Krishna.

DELIVERANCE FROM AGHASURA

One day Krishna was playing with the boys in the forest. At that time a mighty Asura called Agha, who was the younger brother of Putana and Bakasura, came there under the direction of Kamsa. Even the Devas who were rendered immortal by Amrita were afraid of Agha. Aghasura reflected within himself thus, "This is the slayer of my brother and sister. I will take revenge now and kill Krishna along with Balarama and his friends."

The wicked Asura assumed the huge body of a boa-constrictor, one Yojana in length and stout like a big hill. The extremities of his open mouth touched the clouds and the earth. It kept open its cave-like mouth in order to swallow Krishna and his associates. All the boys with all their calves clapped their hands and with a smile entered the mouth of the serpent. The serpent did not close its mouth. It waited with its mouth open for Krishna. Krishna entered the mouth of the serpent and expanded Himself to huge dimensions in the throat of the Asura. The Asura died. Krishna gave fresh life to the cowherd boys and calves and came out with them from the mouth of the Asura. A brilliant light emanated from the huge body of the serpent and entered the body of Krishna.

BRAHMA'S DELUSION

Sri Krishna brought the cowherd boys to the sandy bank of the Yamuna. They all took their breakfast. The calves had strayed away somewhere and could not be found. The cowherd boys were overtaken with sudden fear. They were about to get

up. Krishna stopped them and said that he would find out the calves. He started in search of the calves. Brahma came to the spot and removed the calves and the boys to some secured place and vanished.

Krishna could not find the calves. He returned to the sandy bank of the Yamuna and found that the cowherd boys also had disappeared. He at once knew that it was all the work of Brahma. The Lord Himself assumed the form of the calves and the cowherd boys in order to bring joy to the cows, to the mothers of the cowherd boys and to Brahma himself. All the calves and boys resembled exactly the calves and boys that were missing. The mothers became more attached to their sons, because Krishna Himself assumed the form of their sons. The cows also began to show extraordinary love to their calves.

Krishna went on playing his diverse parts for one year. When only five or six days remained for the completion of the year, Balarama saw one day that the cows were grazing on the summit of the Govardhana Hill. They saw their calves grazing near Vraja. On account of extreme affection, they ran towards the calves through a path which was most difficult for either men or beasts to pass. Milk flowed freely from their udders. Even cows which had given birth to new calves came to their former calves and began to suckle them at their udders. He observed that the people of Vraja had increased affection and love for their sons. He began to reflect within himself thus "I have never before witnessed such deep affection between the cows and the calves that had been weaned long ago. The residents of Vraja love their sons more than Krishna. Surely Lord Krishna has exhibited His Yoga Maya." Balarama opened his eyes and saw that those calves and cowherd boys were none other than Sri Krishna Himself.

Then he said to Krishna, "O Lord! These calves and cowherd boys are neither Devas nor Rishis. They look all like Thee, O Krishna! What is this great mystery? Kindly explain." Thereupon Krishna explained to Balarama what had happened.

He informed him of the trick played by Brahma. Balarama came to know everything.

Brahma returned to Vraja. He saw the boys and the calves. He saw that Sri Krishna was playing with the cowherd boys and calves even as He had been doing a year before. He could not make any distinction between those he placed under his own Maya and those who were created by the Maya of Krishna. Brahma wanted to delude Krishna, but He himself became deluded. All the cowherd boys and calves appeared to him in the form of Sri Krishna. All possessed the blue complexion and were clad in the yellow silken robes. All had four hands and the divine weapons. All wore crowns on their head, earrings, etc. Seeing this wonderful sight Brahma was amazed and stupefied. Sri Krishna drew off the veil of Maya. Brahma regained his consciousness and found Sri Krishna alone searching for the calves and boys.

Brahma fell at the feet of Krishna again and again with tears in his eyes and praised Him.

DELIVERANCE OF DHENUKASURA

One day Sridama, chief playmate of Balarama and Krishna, Subala, Stoka and other companions approached Krishna and Balarama and said, "Not far off is an extensive grove of palmyra trees. Its beauty is indescribable. There are rows of trees full of ripe palmyra fruits. But nobody can enter it, because one Asura Dhenuka by name with many of his kin, prevents people from entering the grove. He has the form of an ass. He has already killed many men. Therefore people do not enter the place out of fear. We smell the fragrance of the fruits even from here. They are very tempting. We want to taste them."

Balarama boldly entered the forest and shook the trees violently. Numerous fruits fell down from the trees. When the Asura heard the sound of the fall of those fruits, he rushed forth and violently kicked Balarama on his chest with his hind feet. Balaram took hold of the ass by both its hind feet and whirled

round his head and hurled it with force against a very large palmyra tree. The Asura died. Then all the kith and kin of Dhenuka attacked both Balarama and Krishna. They were all killed by Rama and Krishna. The companions of Krishna and Rama ate the palmyra fruits to their heart's content. After the death of Dhenuka and his relatives, people entered the grove fearlessly and the cattle also freely grazed on the pasture in that grove.

BOYS AND COWS SAVED FROM THE EFFECT OF POISON

Once Krishna without Balarama but with his other playmates, went to the Yamuna, after wandering through the forest of Brindavan. As the cowherd boys and the cows and the calves were oppressed by the heat of the summer, they felt extremely thirsty. They drank the poisoned water of the Yamuna. They fell dead on the bank of Yamuna soon after they drank it. Sri Krishna revived them by a mere glance radiating forth the life-giving nectar. They regained their consciousness, got up from the edge of the water and began to look at one another in great astonishment. They came to know that they fell dead by drinking the poisonous water of the Yamuna and that Sri Krishna brought them back to life by his gracious looks.

GRACE ON THE KALIYA SERPENT

Formerly, Garuda used to eat snakes. All the snakes came to an agreement with Garuda and every month a snake was offered as sacrifice to Garuda at the foot of a particular tree on the new-moon day. All snakes used to offer to Garuda their share of sacrifice. Garuda was highly pleased with this arrangement. But the serpent Kaliya, son of Kadru, was very proud of his strength. Therefore he did not make any offering himself to Garuda but took away the offerings made by others. Garuda was incensed and attacked him. Kaliya was overpowered in the fight. He sought shelter in a deep pool of water in the Yamuna.

Once upon a time Garuda caught a fish in that pool of

water and was about to eat it. Rishi Soubhari said, "O Garuda! Do not eat this fish." Garuda did not pay any attention to the words of the Rishi. The wailings of the other fishes touched the heart of the Rishi. In order to save the fishes, the Rishi pronounced a curse on Garuda that he would die if he entered that pool any more.

Kaliya knew about this. Therefore he sought shelter in that pool of water with his family.

Sri Krishna noticed that the most venomous snake had rendered the water of the Yamuna poisonous. He wanted to expel the serpent from the river in order to purify the water. Sri Krishna tightened His girdle, climbed a lofty Kadamba tree, and jumped into the pool of water. The serpent fiercely attacked Krishna and stung Him in His vital parts. It completely enclosed Him in its coils. The cows wept and the Gopa boys became senseless. Nanda and other Gopas came out in search of Krishna. They saw Him in the grasp of the powerful serpent and wept bitterly.

Sri Krishna extricated Himself from the clutches of the serpent. He began to sport with it. He got upon its hoods and danced upon them. It had one thousand hoods, one hundred being the chief. The serpent vomited blood. Sri Krishna trampled down with His feet each one of the hoods. The body of the serpent was shattered. The serpent sought the protection of the Lord. The wives of the serpent praised Krishna and prayed for their husband's life. The Lord stopped His dance. Kaliya slowly recovered consciousness.

Krishna said, "O serpent! Do not stay here any more. Go to the sea immediately with all your kith and kin and wives. Let the water of the Yamuna be used by the cows and men. I know that you left Ramanaka island for fear of Garuda and came to live in this pool. But now, as your hoods bear the marks of My feet, Garuda will not touch you." Thereupon Kaliya proceeded to the Ramanaka island in the sea with his wives, friends and children. The waters of the Yamuna then turned as sweet as nectar itself.

SWALLOWING FOREST FIRE

The forest was quite dry due to intense heat of summer. At midnight a great wild fire suddenly broke out and surrounded the people of Vraja on all sides and threatened to consume them all. They sought refuge in Sri Krishna. They cried out, "Pray, protect us from this huge all-consuming fire. O Lord, we are not afraid of death but we cannot leave your lotus feet."

Sri Krishna perceived the helpless condition of His devotees and swallowed up that dreadful fire. Lord Krishna possesses infinite power. This was no act of wonder on His part.

PRALAMBASURA

One day, Balarama, Krishna and other boys adorned themselves with red corals, tufts of peacock feathers, garlands and beautiful forest flowers. Some began to dance, while others began to sing at the top of their voice. An Asura named Pralamba, disguised himself as a Gopa boy and mixed with the other boys. His intention was to carry away both Sri Balarama and Sri Krishna. The All-knowing Krishna found him out but he feigned friendship in order to kill the Asura. Sri Krishna made a proposal to His friends. He said, "O friends! Let us divide ourselves into two parties and play." Thereupon the boys divided themselves into two parties. Some chose to play under the leadership of Sri Balarama and others under the leadership of Sri Krishna. The defeated party had to carry the members of the victorious party on their backs to a certain point.

In the course of the play, Sridama, Vrishabha and other boys belonging to Sri Balarama's party gained victory. Therefore Sri Krishna carried Sridama, Bhadrasena carried Vrisha and Pralamba carried Sri Balarama. Pralamba ran with Balarama beyond the mark. Balarama suspected something evil. Pralamba resumed his own huge form. Balarama hit the Asura on his head with his strong fist and smashed the head of the Asura. The Asura vomited blood and fell dead. The cowherd boys were greatly astonished and shouted, "Well done! Bravo."

THE FOREST FIRE

The cattle strayed away from the Bhadiraka forest. A huge wild fire suddenly broke out in the forest. The cowherd boys approached Sri Krishna, for protection. They said, "O Krishna, our beloved! We take shelter under Thy feet. The wild fire threatens to reduce us to ashes. Thou art the Lord of infinite power. Pray protect us. You are our only Lord. We depend on you alone."

Sri Krishna said, "My dear companions! Do not be afraid; close your eyes." Thereupon the boys shut their eyes. Sri Krishna asked them to open their eyes. When they opened their eyes they found themselves once more in Bhadiraka forest. They were greatly struck with wonder when they saw that all their cows had been miraculously saved from the fire. Observing the Yogic power of Sri Krishna and their miraculous escape from the wild fire, the boys thought that Sri Krishna was no human being but must be immortal God.

THE MUSIC OF THE FLUTE

The forest was lovely and charming on account of the autumn. The water was very clear. A gentle breeze was blowing. Sri Krishna with Balarama, cows and cowhered boys, entered the forest to enjoy the beauty of the scene. He began to play on His flute. The Gopis forgot themselves when they heard the music. The music of the flute steals the hearts of all.

Some Gopis said, "The flute ought to have done great meritorious deeds. That is the reason why it directly enjoys the nectar of Sri Krishna's lips. The water that nourished it is thrilling with joy and the plant from which it took its birth is shedding tears of joy in the form of honey, just as devotees of God shed tears of joy when devotees take birth in their own family line."

Other Gopis said, "This Brindavan has spread the fame of the earth even to Vaikuntha, because it has obtained the grace of being marked with the footprints of Sri Krishna. How beautiful

does Brindavan look from the touch of Sri Krishna's lotus feet! There is no place on earth like Brindavan!

"When Sri Krishna plays on His enchanting flute, the peacocks dance in joy keeping tune with the music. They take the sound to be the mild roar of cloud. Hearing the music of the flute other animals stand motionless. Even the deer hear the music of the flute and make an offering of their loving glances. Even celestial women become absorbed in the music and lose their external consciousness. The cows drink the nectar of music with ears erect and stand motionless with tears of joy in their eyes. The calves eagerly listen to the music and stand with their mother's milk in their mouths. Even the birds sit high on trees and silently hear the enrapturing music of the flute. Even the whirlpools in the rivers show their strong desire to meet Sri Krishna. The rivers show their love to Sri Krishna. They stop their course to hear the sweet music of Krishna. With their arms of waves they throw offerings of lotuses and take hold of Sri Krishna's feet in order to embrace them. Look at the clouds in the sky. They spread themselves over Him like an umbrella. When He plays on the flute in the hot sun, they sprinkle on Him showers like offerings of tiny white flowers and thus offer themselves at the feet of Krishna.

"Blessed is Govardhana, the prince among mountains, because Krishna drives cattle on its sides and it makes its offerings of roots, delicious fruits and fresh water for drinking. What a great miracle does this flute play!"

The Gopis used to forget themselves by describing the various sportful activities of Sri Krishna and singing them. They became merged in Krishna (Tanmaya).

THE STEALING OF CLOTHES

The cold season (Hemanta) set in. The girls of Nanda's Vraja observed a vow and worshipped Goddess Katyayani (Durga). They ate only the purest food. They prayed, "O Katyayani! O ruler of the universe, O great Goddess of wonderful Yogic powers! Let the son of Nanda be our husband.

We bow to your feet." They observed the vow for a month. They took their bath every day in the river Yamuna in the early morning. One day, they left their clothes on the bank and went down into the river to bathe. They sang the praise of Krishna and sported in great joy in the river.

Sri Krishna together with all His friends went to the bank of the river to fulfil the object of their vow. He took away their clothes and quickly climbed the nearest Kadamba tree. He asked the girls to come up and take them. They did so. Krishna returned the clothes.

Krishna then said to the Gopis, "O virtuous and pure girls! I know your resolve. The vow you took has been observed well. You want to worship Me. I approve of it. You will succeed. Those who devote their mind and heart to Me will not obtain the limited objects of desire of this world, for when I become the object of their desire, their desires get burnt. Just as a grain fried or boiled does not germinate, so also the desires directed towards Me cannot lead to worldly enjoyments. Go back to Vraja. Your object in worshipping Katyayani is gained. You will sport with me during the coming autumnal nights.

KRISHNA AND THE VEDIC YAJNA

Sri Krishna accompanied by Balarama and the cowherd boys went far away from Brindavan. It was the summer season. The rays of the sun were extremely severe. The trees gave shade. Krishna said, "Look, my friends! How noble-minded these trees are! They live only for the good of others. They suffer from the winds, the rains, the sun and the frost. Their life is the best life. They sustain other forms of life. They do not send away any one disappointed. They give something to whoever may approach them. They offer their leaves, flowers, fruits, roots, bark, fragrance, juice, fuel, buds, resin, ashes, charcoal, tender shoots, shade, etc. and satisfy the wants of all living creatures. Of all living beings, those who do good to others by their lives, wealth, wisdom and their words justify their birth."

Some of the boys became hungry and approached Sri Krishna and said, "Hunger is oppressing us. Kindly find out some means to appease it." Sri Krishna said, "O friends! The Brahmins, versed in the Vedas, are performing a great sacrifice called Angirasa for the purpose of attaining Heaven in a place which is at a short distance from here. Go to their sacrificial hall. Take our names and ask them for food."

The boys went to the sacrificial hall and asked for food from the Brahmins. The Brahmins turned a deaf ear to them. They looked upon Sri Krishna as an ordinary mortal and ignored His request. Yajna was all in all for them, but they disregarded the Lord of the Yajnas. They thought that they were superior to Krishna. When the Brahmins said neither 'yes' nor 'no', the cowherd boys lost hope, returned disappointed, and reported the facts to Sri Krishna. Krishna laughed and said, "Friends! Go to the wives of the Brahmins this time." They did. The ladies hastened to Krishna with dishes full of eatables of all sorts despite the protests of their husbands, brothers and sons.

Sri Krishna said, "O blessed ladies! Welcome to you all. Please take your seats. Tell me what I should do for you. You have come only to see Me. I am Atman and therefore the most beloved. Those who care for Atman have unconditional and unswerving devotion towards Me. The Prana, Buddhi, mind, body, wife, children, relatives and wealth become dear for the sake of Atman only. What can there be more dear than Atman? Now you have seen Me. Go back to your husbands. They have to perform the sacrifices with your help."

The wives of the Brahmins said, "O Lord! We have sought your feet only. We have abandoned our relatives. Let us wear in our locks the wreath of Tulasi leaves that may fall from your feet. Our husbands, parents, sons, brothers and relations will not accept us. We will be discarded by everyone else in the world. We have no other support. We have laid ourselves at your feet. Be gracious to extend your protection to us. Let us be Thy servants."

Sri Krishna said, "O blessed ladies! Go back to your

homes. Your husbands, sons, parents, etc. will not be displeased with you. By my command, all people, even the Devas, will approve of your conduct. You have been accepted by Me. Therefore the whole world will honour you. Mere physical nearness to Me or direct contact with Me is not necessary for love or devotion. Think of Me with all your heart. You will soon attain Me."

The wives of those Brahmins returned to the sacrificial hall. The Brahmins did not find fault with their behaviour. When the Brahmins came to know that Sri Krishna was God Himself, they repented very much for their conduct. For fear of Kamsa they could not go to Brindavan. They worshipped Krishna at home.

ABOLITION OF INDRA'S WORSHIP

One day, Krishna observed that the people were preparing for the worship of Indra. He asked His father Nanda "Tell me, O father! What is this occasion for your great festivity? What is the object? To whom is it intended? By whom and how is the sacrifice to be performed?"

Nanda replied, "My beloved child! Indra is the Lord of the clouds. He will give us rain by worshipping him. The rains give life to all beings. Therefore, people worship Indra by these sacrificial offerings. Whatever is left after offering him in sacrifice, we use for our subsistence in order to attain the three objects of life, viz. Dharma (righteousness), Artha (earthly possessions) and Kama (worldly enjoyments). Indra is the dispenser of the fruit of our exertions."

Krishna replied, "O revered father! By the force of Karma a creature is born, and by the force of Karma it passes away. The birth and death of men are shaped by their own Karma. Happiness and misery, fear, safety, these are all the effects of Karma. If there be any God who dispenses the fruits of Karma, he must also follow that Karma. He cannot act independently. When people are governed by their own Karma, where does Indra come in? What has Indra to do with creatures here who

simply follow the course of their Karmas? Because he is not able to alter what is fixed for men by Nature, what is predestined by the latent potentialities of one's past deeds. Svabhava or Karmic tendency is decreed by fate. Man is subject to his nature formed by the latent Samskaras of his past deeds. He follows his own nature. The whole universe consisting of Devas, Asuras, men, etc. lives, moves and has its being in Nature. By the force of his Karma a creature attains to several corporeal existences high or low, and also loses them. Karma is one's guide. Karma is the supreme ruler. "What can Indra do? Therefore, let us make offerings to our cows, our Brahmins, our hills, and fallen people. Let dogs be properly fed. Let the cows be supplied with fodder."

Nanda and other Gopas approved what Krishna said. They did everything in accordance with Sri Krishna's instructions. They made offerings to the cows, to the Brahmins and to the hill Govardhana. They went round the hill. Krishna said, "I am the Hill." Sri Krishna assumed another gigantic form and manifested Himself on the top of the hill in order to confirm the faith of the Gopas. He told the people that He was the deity presiding over the mountain. He then began to consume the offerings that were made to the Hill.

RAISING OF GOVARDHANA

Indra became extremely angry with Nanda and the other Gopas. He sent forth his clouds and winds and there were rains, thunder and hail-storms in Brindavan. Krishna lifted up the Govardhana hill with one hand and the people of Brindavan with their cows took shelter beneath the mountain. There was continuous rain for seven days. Sri Krishna held up the hill for seven days continuously without moving an inch.

Indra was quite amazed. His pride was destroyed. He withdrew the clouds and winds. The Gopas went to their own places with their cows and property. Sri Krishna set down the mountain in its original place.

The Gopas were struck with wonder. They came to Nanda

and said, "This boy of seven years uprooted the Govardhana hill from the earth and held it up with one hand continuously for seven days. This marvellous feat cannot be done by an ordinary man. Your son is certainly the Lord of all Lords. He is the Atman of all beings."

Indra and Surabhi came down from Heaven. Indra fell at the feet of Sri Krishna and glorified Him. Indra said, "Thou art the father, the preceptor and the supreme Lord of all the worlds. In order to fulfil the desires of your devotees, you assume a personal form at your own will. Those who like myself are ignorant and are conceited as rulers of the world, get cured of their pride and touch of haughtiness by Thy grace and Darshan. They then take to the path of devotion. O Lord, each of your acts is intended for the punishment and correction of the wicked. I disregarded you as I was intoxicated with the pride of wealth and power. I was devoid of pure understanding, discretion, and discrimination, and so I was ignorant of your greatness. O Lord, forgive me! Grant me pure intellect. Free me from my pride. Salutations unto Thee again and again."

Krishna said to him, "O Indra! I did you a great favour by causing a break in your Yajna. You were extremely proud of your position and power and so you forgot Me. I did this in order to make you remember Me. Power and position produce intoxication in men and Devas. They become haughty. They are rendered blind by power and position. If I wish to do favour to any one, I take away his powers and wealth. O Indra! Go to your celestial abode and do your duties in a satisfactory manner. Abandon pride completely. Follow my commandments. Try to realise constantly My presence. May you be happy!"

CORONATION OF KRISHNA

Surabhi (Kamadhenu), the divine mother of cows thanked Sri Krishna for the services done to her children and said, "O Krishna! O great Yogin! O Inner ruler of all! O Achyuta! Thou art the protector of the universe. Thou art the Supreme Deity. This universe is Thy form. Thou art the root of this world. We

have found out Lord in Thee. Thou shalt be our Indra for the good of cows, Brahmanas and the Devas. By the command of Brahma, we shall install thee as our Indra."

Having thus spoken to Krishna, Surabhi bathed Him with her own milk. Indra along with other Devas, by the command of the Deva mothers, bathed Him with the water of the Akasa Ganga (Heavenly Ganga) brought by Airavata in its trunk. They all proclaimed Krishna to the world by the name Govinda, (*go*—Indriya, cows, Swarga—*vinda*—attain). The Rishis, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, Siddhas and Charanas all joined the inauguration ceremony. The three worlds became full of joy. Cows then flooded the earth with their milk. The rivers flowed with milk and other beverages. Trees yielded sweet honey. Rich crops were harvested on fields not ploughed by the hand of man. Mountains offered precious jewels. Even the wild animals became mild.

Having thus crowned Krishna as the Lord and Protector of cows and Gokula, and having proclaimed Him as Govinda and obtained His permission, Indra returned to Swarga with the Gods and others.

NANDA RESCUED FROM VARUNA

Nanda kept fast on an Ekadasi day and worshipped Janardana. He went to bathe in the river Yamuna on Dvadasi. It was still dark. He entered the river at dead of night. An Asura, a servant of Varuna, seized Nanda and took him to his master.

The Gopas missed Nanda and called out to Balarama and Krishna. On hearing them, the Lord saw that Nanda had been carried away to Varunaloka. Krishna entered the water and went to Varunaloka.

Varuna worshipped Sri Krishna and said, "Today my purpose is gained. I bow to Thee, O glorious Lord! Thy father has been brought here by my ignorant and foolish messenger. Kindly pardon me. Here is Thy father. Please take him back. I had the fortune to see Thee because Thy father was brought here." Lord Krishna took back His father.

Nanda informed the Gopas of what he had seen. Could Krishna be any other than Isvara ?

The Gopas wished fervently that Lord Krishna might take them to His supreme abode. The All-knowing Sri Krishna knew this. He took the Gopas to the portion of Yamuna called Brahmahrada. They were made to plunge in it. There they saw the region of Vaikuntha, the supreme abode of Krishna, far away from the limits of Prakriti. Nanda and others were immensely delighted, when they had a vision of that region. There they saw Krishna. They were most happy to see Krishna amidst the chanters of Vedic hymns. They were all struck with wonder.

COMMENCEMENT OF RASA LILA

Krishna once promised the Gopis that they shall enjoy His company in the coming nights.

Seeing those autumnal nights Lord Krishna wished to enjoy Himself with the help of the inconceivable power of Yoga Maya and to satisfy the long craving of the Gopis. The moon appeared on the horizon. He played on His flute so sweetly as to enchant the Gopis and to steal their hearts.

Hearing that sweet music which kindles the fire of divine love and intensifies the desire to meet God, the Gopis with their hearts captivated by Lord Krishna, unperceived by one another in their attempts to meet Him, hastened to the place where their beloved Lord was, with their earrings rocking to and fro.

Some left their houses while milking the cow. Some did not wait to see the boiling of milk. Some did not take down boiled wheat from the oven. Some were serving food. Some had been suckling their babes, some had been serving their husbands, some had been taking their meals, some had been cleansing their bodies, some had been painting their eyes with collyrium. But they all left their work half-finished. They hurriedly went to Krishna with their garments and ornaments all in disorder in consequence of their great hurry.

They were prohibited and obstructed by their husbands,

parents, brothers and other relatives. But they were going as if in a trance. Their hearts had been completely charmed by Govinda. They did not turn back to their home.

Some Gopis were shut up by their relatives and friends. They could not make their way out. They began meditating on Krishna with their eyes shut. Their thoughts had been already devoted to Krishna. They held Him fast in their minds. Their sins were burnt up by the intense fire of unbearable separation from their most beloved Lord. The effects of their good work were removed by the happy embraces of Achyuta enjoyed in meditation. Their bonds of action were totally severed at that very moment. They gave up their bodies composed of the Gunas, and attained the Supreme Soul or Paramatman even though they thought of Krishna as their paramour and even though they meditated on Him as their beloved.

The Lord who is unchanging, infinite, devoid of all qualities, who is beyond the range of the three Gunas, manifests Himself in the world for the prosperity of the people because He is their controller.

Whoever always meditates on Hari whether through desire, anger, fear, affection, friendship or reverence, becomes unified with Him. You should not therefore be astonished at this, in the case of the glorious unborn Lord, the Lord of even the Masters of Yoga. All, even the lowest life forms, may be emancipated through His grace.

When the Gopis drew near, Krishna addressed them thus:

"O Blessed ones! What good can I do for you? Is Vraja enjoying security and safety? Tell me the object of your coming here. The night is fearful. Fierce animals are roaming about. Go back to Vraja. This is not a place for women. Your fathers, mothers, brothers, sons and husbands must be searching for you. Do not cause anxiety to them. You have seen the beauty of the forest. Return to Vraja. Serve your husbands, calves and children who are crying. Suckle them and milk the cows. If you

have come here on account of the force of your love for Me, it is only natural; because all people love Me.

"Devotion to husband is the one great religion for women. The supreme duty of a woman is to wait upon and do service to her husband with intense devotion. She must seek the well-being of her relatives and nourish her children. Women who long for higher heavenly regions should not desert their husbands even if they be wicked, old, diseased or poor, ill-behaved, awkward, penniless, unless he is a fallen man. For a woman born in a noble family, it is most detestable to resort to a paramour. It brings misery and infamy and is a hindrance to the attainment of Heaven. Therefore it ought to be totally condemned. O Gopis! You may bear love to Me in other ways such as hearing My virtues and deeds, by seeing My form and meditating on Me and by singing My glories than by living near Me. Therefore please return to your homes."

The Gopis said: "O Almighty Lord! It is not fit for Thee to utter these unkind words. We have abandoned everything and sought Thy feet alone. Do not abandon us. Accept us Thy devout servants, just as Lord Narayana accepts His devotees. You know the secret of all Dharma. You are quite right when you say that the natural duty of women lies in being true, obedient and useful to their husbands, children, relatives and friends. Following Thee, who art our spiritual advisor and Lord, we do the will of our husbands and others. You are the goal of those religious instructions. You are the sole Lord. You are the most beloved one, the relative, the Master; the Self of all beings. You are our real husband. Persons well versed in the Sastras find delight in Thee alone who art their own eternally beloved Atman. They offer their love to you and you alone. What purpose could be gained by husbands or sons and others, sources of misery as they are? You are the constant source of happiness for us.

"Therefore do thou show favour to us and permit us to serve Thee. Pray do not cut off our long cherished hopes regarding Thee. Do not drive us from your feet. Our hearts

which were ere long engaged in our houses, are now stolen by Thee. Our feet cannot move even a single step away from you. How then can we go back to Vraja? And what shall we do there?

"O thou dearest one! Extinguish the fire that has been kindled in our heart by the flood of nectar of Thy lips, Thy sweet smiles, loving glances and enchanting music. If not, we shall allow the fire of separation to consume our body, and shall attain you, like Yogins, through meditation.

"O Lord of lotus-like eyes! The most beloved of those who live in the forest! In the forest we did once touch Thy lotus feet that afford delight to Lakshmi. Thus blessed by Thee, from that time forward, we are unable to stand before any other even for a moment. How can we serve our husbands and children?

"Sri Lakshmi for whose gracious glances all other gods perform rigorous penances, even though possessing an unrivalled place on Thy bosom, yet covets with Tulasi the dust on Thy lotus-like feet, sought after and worshipped by Thy devotees and servants. Similarly we have sought shelter in the dust under Thy feet. Therefore, O thou soother of all afflictions! Be thou propitious unto us. We have abandoned our homes and our relations and have sought your feet with the one object of waiting on you. Allow us, who are burning with the intense love inflamed by Thy charming smiles and looks.

"Looking on Thy face overhung with curly locks, with cheeks brilliant with charming earrings, with lips overflowing with nectar, and with thy glances accompanied by enchanting smiles, Thy two arms that promise protection to those who take refuge in Thee, and Thy bosom that delight Sri Lakshmi, we have surrendered ourselves to Thee and become Thy slaves.

"O most beloved one! What woman is there in the three worlds who will not worship Thee, having been charmed with the sweet, melodious music of Thy flute? Having seen this form most bewitching in the three worlds who could help it? Looking at this form, even the cows, birds, trees, deer are filled with delight. It is evident that like the first great person Bhagavan

Narayana taking birth for protecting the celestial regions, Thou hast taken birth for driving away fear and affliction out of the kingdom of Vraja. Therefore, O friend of the distressed! Place Thy lotus-like hands on the throbbing bosoms and aching heads of Thy slaves."

Having heard the piteous appeal of the Gopis, the Lord of the great Yogins was moved by compassion for them. Even though He takes delight only in the Self, He smiled and granted them the joy of sporting with Him.

The Gopis gathered round Him. He remained firmly fixed in the Self. His loving glances and charming smiles brightened the countenances of the Gopis. Achyuta of glorious deeds shone like the moon in the midst of stars.

Sometimes He himself sang. At other times his glory was sung by the Gopis. Adorned with the necklace called Vaijayanti and leading hundreds of groups of Gopis, Lord Krishna roamed about with them adding grace to the woods of Brindavan.

Then He came to the cool sands of the river which looked like the fine particles of refined camphor. Cool breeze from the Yamuna charged with the fragrance of lilies were flowing joyously. The Lord sported with the Gopis.

By stretching His arms, by embraces, by touching their hands, curling locks, thighs, waist, bosom, by scratching them with his finger nails, indulging in laughs and jokes, by sportive glances and enchanting smiles and other sportful acts, He kindled the purest form of divine love in their hearts and gave them delight.

When Sri Krishna, the most generous and the Almighty Lord thus honoured the Gopis by sporting with them, they were elated with pride. They thought that they were superior to all women in the world.

Perceiving their arrogance produced by their good fortune and also their great pride, Keshava (Krishna) suddenly disappeared from the spot to curb their pride and to bless them as well.

GOPIS SUFFER PANGS OF SEPARATION AND SEARCH FOR LORD KRISHNA

Sri Suka said: "At the sudden disappearance of the Lord, the damsels of Vraja (Vrajanganas) became disconsolate. As they were not able to find Him, they were greatly distressed like the she-elephants which miss their leader. Their hearts began to burn in the fire of separation. Their hearts had been so much taken up by the gestures, piercing glances, delightful conversation, sports and frolics and movements of Sri Krishna, that they began to act like Him in a variety of ways. So they imitated His deeds and even called themselves Krishna.

"In gait, smiles, looks, way of talking, movement and the like, they all behaved like Sri Krishna. They exhibited in themselves His deportment and graceful activities. They completely identified themslves with Krishna, each one saying to the other, 'I am Krishna.'

"They all sang loudly together His praise and searched for Krishna from forest to forest. They enquired of the trees, the whereabouts of the best of Purushas, who, like ether, is present inside the hearts of all beings and also in the outside world.

"They said, 'O Asvattha, O Plakshya, O Nyagrodha, have you seen the son of Nanda, who has just disappeared stealing our hearts with His lovely smiles and glances?

'O Kuruvaka, O Asoka, O Naga, O Punnaga, O Champaka! Did Balarama's younger brother, whose very smiles put down the pride of proud women and drive away the anger of offended damsels, go this way?

'O blessed Tulasi, so intensely attached to the feet of Govinda! Did you see thy most beloved Achyuta who always bears thee with the bees on His person?

'O Malati, O Mallika, O Jati, O Juthika! Have you seen Madhava who has gladdened you with the touch of His hands?

'O Chuta (mango tree), O Priyala, O Panasa, O Kovidara Asana, Jambu, Arka, O Asoka, Bilva, Bakula, Amra, Rasala, Kadamba, Nipa, O you other trees! You who live for the sake of

others and dwell near the banks of the holy Yamuna, tell us where Krishna is, point out to us the way which Krishna has followed.

'O Earth! What great austerity hast thou performed that thou shinest now with thy hair standing on end and enjoyest the joy of being touched by the feet of Keshava? Is thy joy caused by the touch of the Lord's feet at present, or was it caused by the tread of Trivikrama on Thy surface or was it caused by the embrace of the Lord when He had assumed the form of a boar?

'O deer, O friend! Did Achyuta pass this way with His dearest lady giving joy to your eyes with His graceful face and limbs? It seems He did so, because here blows the fragrance of the garland composed of the Kunda flower of Krishna, which has been smeared with the saffron on the bosom of His beloved lady when He had embraced her.

'O trees! Did Balarama's brother go this way with His one arm on the shoulder of His beloved one and a lotus in the other, followed by the intoxicated bees on the Tulasi? Did He accept your prostrations with His loving glance?

'O friends! Let us ask these creepers which twine round the branches of the trees, their Lords. They are certainly touched by His fingers. Hence they thrill with joy.'

"They wandered here and there. They were fatigued in their search for Krishna. They developed a still deeper stage of divine love. They perfectly identified themselves with Lord Krishna and began to imitate the various sports of the Lord. One of them acted as Putana, while another played the part of Lord Krishna and sucked her breast. One identified herself with a cart, while another crying as infant Krishna gave a kick with one foot and overturned the cart.

"Another lady imitated the acts of the Daitya Trinavarta and carried another lady who acted the part of infant Krishna. One Gopi began to crawl like baby Krishna dragging the feet with jingling sounds. One Gopi acted as Sri Krishna and another as Sri Balarama. Many others acted as cowherd boys.

One acted as Vatsasura and another as Bakasura. One struck at another who acted as Vatsasura and another at some one who acted as Baka.

"One like Krishna shouted for the cows at a distance calling them by their names and played as it were upon the flute. Other Gopis applauded her with ejaculations of 'Well done, well done.'

"A gopi whose mind was absorbed in Krishna placed her arm on the shoulder of another lady and began to walk and said to the others present, 'I am Krishna: behold my graceful gait.' Another Gopi said, 'O people of Vraja, do not be afraid of this rain and storm. See I am providing you with shelter.' So saying she imitated the act of uplifting the Govardhana hill, by lifting up her upper cloth with one hand.

"One Gopi said, 'O cowherds! Behold this terrible forest conflagration. Shut your eyes soon. I shall quickly bring about your welfare.'

"One Gopi climbed on the shoulder of another, placed her feet on the other's head and said, 'O wicked serpent; get away; do you not know that I have been born as a chastiser of the wicked?'

"One Gopi acted the part of Yasoda, and tied another who acted as Sri Krishna to a third, who stood for the wooden mortar and said, 'Here I find the thief who has stolen the butter after having broken the pot.' The Gopi who acted the part of Sri Krishna covered her face with her palms and began to tremble like one in fear.

"Having thus questioned the trees and creepers of Brindavan about the whereabouts of Krishna, they noticed that footprints of the Lord in a certain part of the forest. Then they said, 'evidently these are the footprints of the high-souled son of Nanda, as they show the marks of a flag (Dhvaja), a lotus (Padma), a mace (Gada), a thunderbolt (Vajra), goad (Ankusa), barley (Yava), etc.' Tracing those footprints a little further, they

found they were mixed up with the footprints of a girl. Then they were very much afflicted in their hearts.

"The Gopis said: 'Whose footprints are these? Who is this girl, who has gone resting her arm on the shoulder of the son of Nanda, as a she-elephant goes with her lover, the chief of the elephants? Certainly that girl has fervently adored the Almighty Lord Krishna and specially propitiated Him. That is the reason why Govinda is pleased to take her apart, leaving us all behind. O friends! The dust from the lotus feet of Govinda is highly blessed, for Brahma, Rudra and the Goddess Lakshmi hold these dust particles on their heads for absolution from all sin.

"These footprints of the girl greatly pain our hearts, because she has led Achyuta away and is alone enjoying the nectar of His lips in seclusion.

"Here we do not find the impression of her feet. It seems that the soles of her tender feet being pricked with grasses and thorns and the beloved Lord has carried her on His shoulder. The impressions of Lord Krishna's feet are deeper here as He carried the girl. Look at them, how deep are the impressions of the love-stricken Krishna under a heavy load. He must have borne the girl on His shoulders here. Here He placed her down to pluck flowers and touched the earth with his toes only, for the steps are not fully marked. Surely He sat on this spot for the purpose of combing her hair and putting these flowers on the braids of her hair.

"Lord Krishna delights only in the Self or Atman. He is the Perfect Lord. He is one and indivisible. He is ever pure. He is free from impurities (Mala), desires, cravings. He is the Lord of Maya. Maya cannot touch Him. He experiences oneness but not duality. He was not attracted by the amours of these damsels of Vraja. How can the ordinary lust of human beings be attributed to Him? Yet the Perfect Lord sported with that girl merely to show to the world how wretched and miserable is the condition of one who is under the sway of lust.

"Thus illustrating the ways of women, those Gopis roamed

from forest to forest showing unto one another the footprints of Krishna.

That Gopi whom Krishna had led into the forest forsaking others regarded herself to be the foremost of all women. She thought, 'The beloved Lord prefers me to all other Gopis who love Him.'

"She became elated with pride and said to the Lord in the heart of the forest, 'O beloved! I am unable to walk any longer. Therefore please carry me wherever it pleaseth Thee.'

'Lord Krishna said, 'Well, dear, then mount on My shoulder.' As soon as the Gopi attempted to mount on Him, He disappeared. The girl was loudly lamenting. She cried in distress, 'O Lord, O love! O most beloved! Where art Thou? O long-armed one, Where art Thou gone? O friend, please bless me with Thy presence. I am Thy helpless servant.'

"Those Gopis who had been following the footprints of the Almighty Lord saw at a distance their companion forsaken by the Lord, bewildered and distressed. They all approached her and heard from her, how she enjoyed the special favour of Lord Krishna and how, through her own wickedness she lost it? The Gopis were highly astonished when they heard this.

"Thereafter, they again searched for Him in the forest so long as the moon was shining. They gave up the search when darkness set in.

"Their hearts were absorbed in the Lord. They talked of Him alone. They imitated His sportful activities. They were totally unified with Him. They sang only of His excellent qualities. They did not think of their homes. Thus deeply merged in the contemplation of Lord Krishna, the Gopis returned to the same sands in the bed of Yamuna and began to sing in chorus about Sri Krishna's qualities, yearning for His return."

GOPIKA GITAM

(Gopis' Song)

Overwhelmed with intense grief at their separation from Lord Krishna, the Gopis began to sing as follows:—

"By Thy birth in the kingdom of Vraja, it has been highly blessed. That is why the Goddess Lakshmi has begun to dwell here eternally. We are all Thy slaves and are roaming here and there in the forest in quest of Thee. Pray reveal Thyself unto us who are living only for Thy sake. We are wandering in the forest seeking Thee in every direction.

"O Lord! The Bestower of supreme enjoyment, O bestower of boons! We are Thy servants. Is this not really killing when you disappoint us after piercing our heart, with the shaft of your eyes which rob the beauty of the full-blown autumnal lotus in a lake?

"O best of men? Thou hast saved us repeatedly from the destruction caused by the poisonous water of the Yamuna, from the Rakshasa Agha who had assumed the form of a huge serpent, from the winds and the rains, from lightning and thunder and wild fire, from demons like Arista and Vyomasura, and from all sources of fear.

"Thou art surely the son of Yasoda. Thou art the witness of the inmost hearts of all corporeal beings. Implored by Brahma, thou hast appeared in the line of the Satvatas for the protection of the universe.

"O beloved one, O foremost of the Vrishnis! Place on our heads Thy gracious and lotus-like palm which bestows all boons, with which thou holdest the Goddess Lakshmi and with which thou givest assurance of safety to those who, being afraid of the fearful Samsara, seek refuge under Thy feet.

"O Thou allayer of affliction of the people of Vraja! O mighty hero! O beloved Lord whose smiles put down the pride of Thy devotee! O friends! We are Thy servants. Please accept us and show us poor women Thy charming and lotus-like face.

"Place on our bosom Thy lotus feet that remove the sins of those who prostrate themselves at Thy feet, that are merciful even unto the beasts that live upon grass, that are being served constantly by Lakshmi, that are the repository of all prosperity and that had been placed on the hood of the serpent Kaliya. May Thou be pleased to place Thy feet on our bosom and remove the affliction and burning of our heart.

"O Lord of lotus eyes! O gracious hero! Pray comfort us who are swooning for Thee, with Thy charming speech which is most delightful even to the wise and with the elixir of Thy eyes.

"The nectar of Thy stories is life to the distressed. It is highly praised by wise men and devotees. The sweet and sacred account of your life destroys all sins and bestows all blessings the moment it is heard. It brings solace to every heart. Those who sing them and celebrate them do the greatest act of charity on earth.

"O deceitful one! O darling! Thy smiles, Thy hearty laugh, Thy loving looks, Thy captivating sports, most delightful to contemplate on, Thy promises of love all have gone deeply into our heart. These are agitating our minds.

"O Lord! Thy feet are as tender as the lotus. When Thou goest out of Vraja to graze the cows, we feel troubled at heart to think that they may be hurt by hard stones, pointed grass and thorns.

"O hero! At the close of the day, Thou art often seen with Thy face like unto a lotus, overhung with dark curly hair and sprinkled with the dust raised by the hoofs of the cows. Thy sight, then, kindles the fire of love in our hearts and rouses the desire to meet Thee.

"O giver of delight! O Lord who removes the distress of people! Place on our bosom Thy lotus feet which fulfil the desires of those who prostrate themselves at Thy feet, which are adored by the lotus-born deity (Brahma), which enhance the beauty of the ground on which they are placed, which ought to

be meditated upon in times of distress and danger, and which bestow peace to those who serve them.

"O hero! Permit us to drink the nectar from Thy lips which excites desire in our hearts, which destroys all grief, which the flute full of Thy voice enjoys in full measure, which makes us forget every other form of attachment and which is capable of destroying all low passions and lust from the mind.

"When Thou goest away to the forest during the day, a moment appears to us like an age without Thy sight. When we see Thy beautiful face graced with ringlets of hair, we begin to curse the dull-witted Brahma for creating eyelids which by their fall every now and then interrupt our vision.

"O Achyuta! We have abandoned our husbands, sons, relatives, brothers and friends and have come to Thee. Thou knowest the reason of our coming to Thee. We have been charmed by the melodious music of Thy divine flute.

"O deceiver! Whoever else, save Thee, would ever desert women who have trusted Thee? O beloved one! having remembered Thy sweet smiling face, Thy affectionate glances, the beauty of Thy broad chest, the abode of Sri Lakshmi, we are burning with desire and our hearts are becoming enchanted.

"O darling! Thy birth is for removing the misery of those who dwell in Vraja and also for the well-being of the universe. Our heart is pining for Thee. O Lord! Do not be miserly. Grant us who cherish only Thee, at least a little of that balm or remedy which will surely kill all the pain in our heart.

"O beloved! Thou walkest in this dreary forest with those graceful, delicate lotus feet, which we very gently place on our hard bosom, lest we should pain them. O Lord! Our whole life is centred in Thee. Thou art our very life. Are not Thy feet now pained with gravels? Our mind reels to think that Thy tender feet may be hurt by the hard gravels which are strewn on the ground of this forest."

SRI KRISHNA SUDDENLY APPEARS AND CONSOLES THE GOPIS

The Gopis began thus to sing loudly and extol the glories of Krishna. They longed to see their beloved Krishna. They wept bitterly and poured forth their lamentations in notes of true music. Thereupon, Sri Krishna appeared in their midst wearing yellow garments and garland of wild flowers, with a smiling and lotus-like countenance capable of attracting the heart of even the God of love.

The moment the Gopis saw Him return, they all stood up with their eyes wide open with joy, just as the limbs revive and do their functions at the return of life.

One of the Gopis in great joy caught hold of the lotus-like hand of Lord Krishna with both her palms and began to rub it gently. Another Gopi placed on her shoulder Sri Krishna's arm smeared with sandal paste. A third placed His lotus feet on her bosom which had been aching on account of roaming on hard ground.

Another Gopi drank with the cup of her winkless eyes the nectar of the lotus-like face of Sri Krishna, but she was not satisfied, just as pious people are not satisfied with serving His feet. Another took the Lord through the gate of her eyes into the very cavity of her heart, closed the eyes and remained like a Yogin merged in bliss during meditation.

All the Gopis became very happy. They abandoned all sorrow that had been produced by their separation from Him, just as people who are desirous of attaining the final emancipation overcome all mundane affliction, by attaining Self-realisation.

Surrounded by those Gopis whose cause of grief had then been removed, the glorious Achyuta appeared highly beautiful like the Prime Purusha environed by His Saktis or powers like wisdom, strength, Aisvarya, Sri, etc.

Krishna then, in company of those Gopis, repaired to the sandy bank of the Yamuna that swarmed with bees, attracted by

the sweet odour of the full-blown Kunda flowers. The darkness of the night had long been removed by the silvery rays of the autumnal moon. The place became exceedingly delightful. The banks of the river were covered with delicate shining sands that seemed to be levelled by the hand-like waves of the Yamuna.

The agony of heart of the Gopis was removed by the joy produced at the sight of Sri Krishna, which made them attain the end of their desires like the Srutis that lead to realisation and leave nothing to be wished for. They spread out their veils smeared with saffron dust, from their bodies and made a seat for their beloved Sri Krishna.

Thereafter the Almighty Lord who is enthroned in the inmost heart of great Yogis, sat upon those veils. He appeared exceedingly beautiful when He sat in the midst of the assembly of Gopis. He was worshipped by them. Then He assumed a form which seemed to combine in it all the beauty of the three worlds.

They welcomed Sri Krishna with enchanting smiles and playful glances which had excited love in their heart and placed His hands and feet on their lap. They praised Him and spoke as if somewhat offended.

The Gopis said: "Some people are attached to those who are devoted to them. Others are attached to persons who are not devoted to them; again there are people who are attached neither to those who are devoted to them, nor to those who are not devoted to them. O Krishna! Please explain to us the reason for this clearly."

The Lord said: "O friends! Those who love only when they are loved are actuated by a selfish motive. They are prompted by their own selfish interests. There is neither friendship nor virtue in this. It is all for a selfish end. In truth they are not really attached to one another, but are attached to their own selves and to their own interests. Their only motive is gratification of self and nothing else.

"Those who are attached to persons who are not devoted to them are like parents, full of kindness and affection. Their

conduct is governed both by righteousness and goodwill. They are of two kinds, viz. those who are kind, and those who are affectionate. Of these the former by their attachment reap great religious merit, while the latter secure unshaken friendship.

"Then there is a third class of people who are not attached to persons devoted to them. Then how could they be expected to love those who do not seek them at all? These are of four classes. 1. Those who find delight only in Atman and know nothing of the external world. 2. Those who have obtained the objects of their desires. 3. Those who are ungrateful. 4. Those who injure their well-wishers.

"O friends! I do not belong to any of these classes. I do not attach Myself to those who are devoted to Me. This does not mean that I do not love them. I do so in order to intensify their devotion, to draw their heart all the more to Me, so that in their hearts they may be fully absorbed in Me. Then they will not care for anything else. They will devote themselves constantly to Me and remember Me. Just as a penniless man, who accidentally attains some wealth and subsequently loses it, solely thinks of that money only and thinks of nothing else, so also I become the object of constant thinking of the devotees when I hide Myself again and again after meeting them.

"Even though I am granted the duration of life enjoyed by the celestials, yet I shall never be able to return the excellent services done to Me by you all. Your relation with Me is absolutely pure and faultless. O beloved Gopis! For My sake you have completely cut asunder the very hard ties of family life. I shall remain a debtor to you for all time. Let your own goodness be the only recompense for your devotion. May your own righteousness bring its fullest reward!"

GOPIS' LOVE

Goipis' love for Krishna was not a physical passion. It was supreme love. For them Lord Krishna was the living God. He was the moving image of the Supreme Lord. Their faith was

intense. When they thought of Lord Krishna they forgot their worldly activities. They were merged in the love of Krishna.

Lord Krishna attracted their hearts from His very boyhood. He was a very beautiful child. He was beauty incarnate. So the Gopis began to love Krishna from His very birth. They caressed and loved Krishna as they would do their own children. The Gopa girls of Brindavan loved Krishna as their own brother. Is there any sexual love betwen brother and sister? A sister loves her younger brother. She fondles him and plays with him. Such was the relationship between the Gopis and Krishna.

Gradually the love for Krishna assumed the shape of intense Prema (divine love). They thought of Krishna alone when they churned the curd, when they took water from the well. They sang His praises when they took bath. They remembered Him when they took food and at all times. Their minds became *Krishnamaya* by incessant practice of Smarana (remembrance) of the Lord.

It is possible that when the Gopis grew of age they might have been moved by physical love also, as it is the case with every animated being. Sleep, food and sex are common to all living beings.

But Lord Krishna knew the hearts of the Gopis. He turned the hearts of the Gopis to the proper direction by completely eradicating lust from their minds. It is with this purpose in view that Lord Krishna played the Rasa Lila with the Gopis.

At the time of Rasa Lila, He multiplied Himself into so many Krishnas. The Gopis were struck with wonder and amazement. All their idea of physical love entirely vanished due to this miracle. They witnessed the showers of flowers poured from the skies by the Devas. They saw the Vidyadharas, Gandharvas, Yakshas, Charanas, etc. singing the praise of the Lord. They enjoyed the blissful company of the Lord at the time of Rasa Lila, a bliss millions of times greater than the bliss they would enjoy through sense objects. They enjoyed the bliss of Samadhi or union with God.

'This is this, this is that'—this conception of difference is only the delusion of a man whose mind is distracted and uncontrolled and is not united to the Lord. The man of uncontrolled mind falls into the error that there is plurality of objects. This error leads to merit and demerit, or right and wrong, good and evil. The uncontrolled Jiva, who is bewildered and deluded by this diversity created by the natural outward tendency of the senses, fancies himself as a separate unit in the world and begins to entertain desires and enjoys sensual objects. Duty, non-performance of duty and the performance of forbidden acts (Karma, Akarma and Vikarma) result from this delusion of diversity caused by the mind, senses and intellect. The differences of action, inaction and evil action pertain only to the man who has notions of merit and demerit, right and wrong, good and bad. It is the delusion born of the conception of differences, that causes the experiences or notions of right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. The Vedas speak of the performance of prescribed work, the non-performance of prescribed work, and the performance of prohibited work, for those only who have got the ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. One should abandon the sense of egoism, control the mind and the senses and behold everything in the universe as Brahman. One should realise the essence of one's own nature, bliss and harmony with the universe and behold the widespread universe in the Self and the Self in the Supreme Lord.

He who has risen above good and bad does not refrain from doing what is prohibited from a sense of fear of evil consequences nor does he do the prescribed duty in the hope that it will conduce to merit; but he acts only like a child. The sense of right and wrong will be natural in him independently of scriptural teachings. He has destroyed all egoism. The laws of the world do not affect him. He has no more duties to perform. He is above Karma and Karmas cannot touch him. He may, for the instruction of the world, perform works or refrain from

forbidden acts. He will exceed the limits of both right and wrong.

This wonderful and unprecedented experience made the Gopis firmly believe that Krishna was not an ordinary mortal. They had firm conviction that Krishna was the Lord Himself, though sometimes they saw Him as the son of Nanda and Yasoda only. The idea of Lord Krishna as God was not strong in them till the time of Rasa Lila due to the Yoga Maya of the Lord.

The song of the Gopis (Gopika Gitam) in Bhagavata (Skandha X-Ch. 31) bears ample proof of the fact that they regarded Krishna as the Supreme Lord. They got rid of the least tinge of sex-passion in them and were attached to the Lord by the bonds of intense Prema (divine love).

The superhuman miracles of Krishna in his childhood made them believe in his Omniscience and Omnipotence. Would there be a worse fool in this world who would have lower passion towards the Lord who is the bestower of all desires of men? The Lord is the supreme cause for all happiness that men experience. Having seen Him face to face, what greater fool is there who could crave for lower pleasures. Would anybody crave for black sugar (Gur) when sugarcandy is available in plenty?

From this it is clear that the love of Gopis towards Krishna was of a divine nature. They had *ananya bhakti* and they were free from all lower and base desires for sexual enjoyment.

SECRET OF RASA LILA

Rasa Lila is divine sport (Kreeda) with the devotees for bringing about their union with the Lord through Prema or pure divine love. Rasa is the sweetest juice of Prema. It is the manifestation of divine love or higher emotion which takes the devotee to the magnanimous height of holy communion with the Lord.

Lord Krishna's Rasa Lila is the mystery of mysteries. It is the secret of secrets. It is not a matter for intellectual discussion. It is a holy matter for silent meditation for devotees. It should

not be divulged to insincere critics or those who have no devotion to the Lord. It should be studied with reverence and faith. It contains *madhurya rasa,* the crowning glory of Bhakti, which leads to absolute self-surrender and absorption in the Lord.

Sri Krishna performed the Rasa Lila to destroy carnality by means of pure love or Prema. He taught humanity through the Rasa Lila how to convert passion into dispassion and pure love, and how to wean the mind from the sexual Vasanas and instincts. He showed that through *madhurya rasa* one can effect total self-surrender or Atma-Nivedan, and attain Sayujya or absorption in the Lord or husband of our hearts.

Rasa Lila was a sport (Kreeda) which was meant to build up the faith, to strengthen spirituality towards holiness, to improve the minds of the Gopis in particular and humanity in general.

Krishna was ten years old when he performed the Rasa Lila. During the dance, the Gopis saw Krishna only, within, without, around and everywhere. They forgot all about their homes, husbands, children and parents. Their hearts melted in Lord Krishna, the Supreme Soul. The fire of devotion brought about a fusion of hearts. The glue of Prema cemented their hearts with Krishna. The Gopis were not ordinary women. They were exalted personages.

The five chapters of the Bhagavata which describe the Rasa Lila are the 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd and 33rd of the tenth Skandha. When Rasa Kreeda commenced, Krishna disappeared in the course of it to put down the pride of Gopis. Gopis went in search of Sri Krishna. They assembled on the sands of the Yamuna expecting His return. Gopis sang song (Gopika Gitam). Sri Krishna suddenly appeared in the midst of complaining Gopis. Sri Krishna danced with Gopis.

The tenth Skandha of the Bhagavata is regarded as the quintessence of the whole of the Bhagavata. The five chapters on Rasa Lila are rightly considered to be the very quintessence

of the whole of the tenth Skandha. You cannot find in the whole range of the vast Sanskrit literature a treatise like the Rasa-panchadhyayi of Srimad Bhagavata. These chapters are soul-stirring, sublime and mystical. They are extremely profound and subtle in their philosophical contents.

He who has perfect faith in the Sastras and the existence of God, who is devoted to his Guru, who has controlled his passions and the senses, who is endowed with purity, dispassion, discrimination, who yearns for the Darshan of the Lord and communion with Him, and who lives in the midst of devotees and sages is a proper Adhikari or qualified person to study Rasa Lila. For him alone the mysteries of Rasa Lila and its divine significance and import will be truly revealed, like the Amalaka fruit in the palm of the hand.

For a passionate man, whose heart is surcharged with carnality and sexual Vasanas, who has allowed his senses to run riot, who does not wish to rise above the life in the senses, who does not believe in supersensuous things and higher superconscious divine life of bliss and ecstasy, these five chapters which deal with the divine Lilas of Lord Krishna are nothing but some kind of profane literature. He will not be benefited in the least by the study of this portion of Bhagavata.

Rishis and devotees like Narada, Vyasa, Sukadeva and Gouranga shed profuse tears when they recited the Slokas of the Rasa Lila. The Munis of the Naimisaranya listened to them with deep emotion of divine Prema. Parikshit heard them on his deathbed for his final emancipation. Pearls have no value for the swine. Even so, these sublime things which lead a sincere devotee to communion with the Lord, have no value for an irreligious, materialistic, passionate man.

The whole Rasa Lila is pervaded by only pure divine love, or culmination of Bhakti. It is a sacred Yajna. The individual souls (Gopis) melt themselves in the Supreme Soul or Lord Krishna in their highest devotion. The two become one. It is the realisation of oneness of Vedanta through Para Bhakti. The relation between Sri Krishna and the Vraja Gopis was most

sacred. There was not a tinge of carnality in it. Can there be a tinge of carnality in one who is the creator, preserver and destroyer of the three worlds who is the womb of all created beings, who is an embodiment of purity itself, who is the protector of Dharma and who is the world-teacher?

The Rasa Lila had for its object spiritual unification with the Lord. Absorption in the Lord or oneness, is only possible through pure love and love alone, which the Gopis of Brindavan had. The tie between Lord Krishna and the Gopis was divine love wherein there was not the least tinge of physical passion. The bond between Sri Krishna and the Gopis was the purest and holiest. The nature of divine love cannot be imagined by the worldly-minded persons, however intellectual they may be. A worldly man will always think of a man and a woman in terms of sex only, because his intellect is veiled, and the understanding is clouded. He may have an idea of this divine love to some extent, if he remembers of the love he bears towards his mother. Is this not free from carnality?

Lord Krishna desired to set Himself through His Yoga Maya, to guide his devotees to Truth through the pleasant form of Lila (sport). The Rasa Lila teaches how to conquer lust. The five chapters are intended to bring about a total disinclination to worldly matters.

It was an autumnal night. Lord Krishna sang the Kala songs and played on the flute at night on the banks of the Yamuna. There was charming moon-light. It delighted the hearts of the Gopis. They rushed forth to the place where their beloved Krishna was. They cast aside their household duties. Their minds were absorbed in Krishna.

Lord Krishna said, "Go back to your homes, look after your husbands, parents and children. The calves and your children are weeping. Devotion to husband is the one great religion for women."

The Gopis replied, "O Lord! We have given up everything for Thy sake. We have sought Thy feet. Do not forsake us. Thou

art Thyself the goal of all religious injunctions. Why should we care for husbands or sons, who are the source of misery, when we are attached to Thee—the constant source of happiness? Permit us to serve Thee."

Lord Krishna was very much moved by their piteous appeals. He allowed them to stay. The Gopis became very proud on account of the company of the Lord. They thought that they were superior to all other people on earth. Lord Krishna suddenly disappeared in order to put down their pride.

The Gopis were very much afflicted in their heart. They searched for Krishna from forest to forest. They asked the trees and plants, the creepers, the earth and the deer, if they had seen their beloved.

Tears rained down their cheeks. All their thoughts were directed to Krishna. They talked of Krishna alone. They were full of Krishna. They began to play the different Lilas of Krishna. They went to the bank of the Yamuna and sang in a chorus about Krishna and prayed fervently for His return. These songs are as sweet as nectar. They are very touching.

Krishna appeared with a smiling face. The Gopis rejoiced. Their pangs of separation ceased.

Krishna said, "O Beloved Gopis! You have abandoned, for my sake, your husbands, children, relatives and friends. I disappeared for some time in order to make your love flow on steadily. You are my most beloved ones. I shall never be able to repay that love if I live for ever. You have formed a very pure and holy relation with me."

Then Krishna danced with the Gopis. On either side of Him there was a Gopi, and there was a Krishna on either side of a Gopi. The Gopis formed a circle. Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, was between every two of them. Each of them felt that Krishna was near to her. What a great miracle! It is only the Omnipotent Lord who can do such a miracle of multiplying Himself! Does this not bespeak of the Omnipotence of the Lord! The sky became filled with hundreds of chariots of Devas with their

consorts. They were eager to witness the scene. They sprinkled flowers from above. The Gandharvas sang the glory of Lord Krishna.

Radha or Radhika is the chief of the Gopis. She made Aradhana of Krishna. Radhika means literally one who makes Radhana or Aradhana (worship). She was an embodiment of love. Radha is an embodiment of Lord Krishna Himself. Radha and Krishna are inseparable like heat and fire.

By the Rasa Lila, Lord Krishna demonstrated that He is the real husband or friend. He is the Supreme Purusha in this body, He is the supporter, the enjoyer, the great Lord and the Supreme Self. (Gita: Chapter XIII-22). He is the manifestor of all the senses. He dwells in all beings. He Himself has taken the form of body, mind, Prana and the senses. He is the real actor and enjoyer. Even the minds of those who are turned away from the Lord are attracted towards the Lord by means of Sringara Rasa or love topics; hence the love topics of Sri Krishna. The people of Vraja never missed their wives from their side, through the Lord's Yoga Maya. What a great miracle! One Gopi was forcibly detained at home by her people. Immediately she left her physical body and became one with the Lord. Does this not indicate that Krishna was a Superman or the Lord and that Gopis were not attached to the Lord by the bond of physical love? The Gopis were the greatest devotees of the Lord. They had reached the zenith of devotion by worshipping Him through Madhurya Bhava, the highest culmination of Bhakti.

Men who are immersed in the ocean of Samsara, whose minds are full of sex passion only, misunderstand the Lord, and find fault with the divine play, Rasa Lila.

Passion, as for a lover, is the highest form of love. The Lord should be loved as Radha loved Sri Krishna. Of all kinds of love, Radha's love is famous in all our scriptures as the highest.

The three worlds cannot match Radha's love. Radha left the Rasa dance in anger and wounded pride. Krishna left the

circle of the Rasa dance of the Gopis and wandered through the forests mourning for Radha. When He could not find her He was much grieved. Thousands of Gopis could not satisfy Him. From this you can infer Radha's merit.

Radha is an embodiment of Mahabhava or the highest emotion. The mystery of Rasa Lila cannot be understood by ordinary devotees. Only Sakhis or Gopis were blessed with the secrets of this Rasa. The Sakhis only were qualified for this. Bhaktas of Santa, Dasya and Vatsalya types hardly understand this. Those devotees who adore Krishna with Madhurya Bhava or Sakhi Bhava only can relish this Rasa.

Gopis' love was not sexual passion. It was pure unselfish divine love. They did not wish for Krishna's embrace, but they tried their level best to make Krishna embrace Radha. To achieve this end, they sent Krishna to Radha under many pretexts. By so doing they enjoyed a bliss hundred million times sweeter than of selfish enjoyment. Krishna was very much pleased, when He witnessed the pure, selfless love of the Gopis. The unselfish love of the Gopis intensified the Prema Rasa.

A Sakhi or Gopi did not at all wish to play with Krishna for her own enjoyment. She rejoiced heartily by inducing Krishna to embrace Radha. Radha is the creeper of the Love of Krishna. The Sakhis or Gopis represent the leaves, flowers and twigs of this creeper. If the nectar of dalliance with Krishna waters the creeper, the leaves, flowers and twigs rejoice in it hundred million times more than themselves if they had been watered.

If you want to gain Krishna, you must serve Him as a Gopi. You must adore Him with the mental attitude of a Gopi. The devotee who worships Krishna with a Gopi Bhava, enjoys the Madhurya Rasa.

The Rasa Lila should be enacted by pure-minded devotees only, in closed quarters for the select few who have devotion. Then only it will produce an indelible impression on the spectators and instil devotion in their hearts. Madhurya Bhava is the most sacred one.

Nowadays selfish people and false votaries with impure heart play the part of Krishna and Radha in open platforms for the sake of earning money. This will produce only a baneful influence on the minds of the spectators. People should not attend such Rasa Lilas. They should not encourage such people who do much harm to the public by broadcasting poison. He who is a slave to his body and who is a slave of lust, should not perform Rasa Lila even in his mind. If he does so, through ignorance, he is sure to be ruined. It is only Siva who could drink the poison that came out from the ocean of milk.

He who hears or recites this sacred play of Lord Krishna with the women of Vraja, will develop supreme devotion to the Lord and shake off easily in no time that disease of the heart called Kama or passion for women.

May you all perform Rasa Lila daily in the Brindavan of your heart, by melting the mind in the Lord, through intense Prema like that of the Vraja Gopis!

RASA LILA

Govinda commenced Rasa or sportive dance with the devoted and worshipping Gopis who formed a circle with one another's arms intertwined.

Then having stationed Himself between every two Gopis, Krishna, the Lord of all Yogas, commenced in that circle of Gopis the festive dance known as Rasa Lila with His arms about the neck of the adjacent Gopis. Every Gopi felt that her dearest Lord stood by her side.

The sky became filled with hundreds of chariots of Devas and their consorts. They were longing to witness the divine dance. Kettle-drums were sounded and there was a shower of flowers. The great Gandharvas and their wives began to sing Sri Krishna's pure glory. Then the circle of Rasa dance was filled with the sounds of bracelets, bangles, anklets and small bells of the damsels enjoying the company of their beloved Lord. In the minds of those damsels, the glorious Lord, son of Vasudeva,

shone with great brilliance and beauty like a large emerald at the centre of a garland of golden beads.

With their measured steps, with the graceful movements of their hands, with their bewitching smile, with the lovely contraction and expansion of their eyebrows, with shaky bodies, with earrings rocking on their cheeks, with their moving locks of hair covering their foreheads, with drops of perspiration trickling down their face, and with the knots of their hair loosened, the Gopis began to sing. They appeared beautiful like flashes of lightning illuminating the blue clouds.

The Gopis were immensely delighted at the touch of Sri Krishna whose music filled the whole world. They sang in the highest pitch with great love.

A Gopi proceeded to sing in chorus with Krishna the notes of the gamut. She suddenly raised her voice to a higher pitch and sang beautifully. The Lord highly praised her by saying "well done, well done." The Gopi, thus having been encouraged, raised her voice to Dhruva Tala. Krishna again honoured her.

Another Gopi got fatigued during her dance. The jasmine flowers began to drop from her braid, and her bracelets became loose on her wrists. She threw her arm round the neck of Sri Krishna and pressed Him close to her.

Another Gopi smelt on her shoulder Sri Krishna's arms fragrant like lotus and smeared with sandal. She kissed it while the hair of her body stood on end out of ecstacy.

Another Gopi placed her cheek on Krishna's cheek which was beautiful by the lustre of His earrings that were rocking on account of the movements of His body in dancing.

Another Gopi was dancing and singing by His side jingling the anklets at her feet. When she got fatigued, she pressed Sri Krishna's comforting lotus-like palms to her bosom.

Thus the Gopis obtaining Achyuta, the beloved husband of Lakshmi, and being embraced by His arms, sang and danced with Him.

With the beauty of their face enhanced by the lilies on their ears, with their foreheads decorated with flowing locks, with drops of sweat on their face, the Gopis danced with the glorious Lord to the accompaniment of the music of their bangles and anklets in the court of Rasa, where the humming bees were the songsters.

Sri Krishna sported with the beautiful damsels, just as a child plays with image reflected in a mirror, delighting them by pressure of hand, affectionate glances, with winning laughs, and enchanting smiles.

O Parikshit! Their senses were overwhelmed with joy at the contact of the Lord's person. The garlands of flowers and their ornaments were loosened and fell from their places. They were not able to keep their hair, clothes and vests in their proper places. At the sight of this wonderful Rasa of Lord Krishna, the celestial women were stricken with love and fainted. The moon of her retinue of stars stopped her course and stood in amazement.

Though the Lord always finds delight in Himself alone, yet He sported with the Gopis in playfulness, in as many forms as there were Gopis.

When the Gopis were greatly fatigued, the merciful Lord wiped the sweat off their faces with His auspicious hands.

The touch of Sri Krishna's hand gave immense delight to the Gopis. They sang songs of His meritorious deeds and offered homage to the Lord with the splendour of their cheeks glowing with effulgent gold earrings and curly flowing locks, and with their delightful glances and smiles sweeter than nectar.

Then Lord Krishna entered into the waters of the Yamuna along with the Gopis in order to refresh Himself, just as a leader of an elephant-herd accompanied by the she-elephants plunges in the waters after having broken through the dams. The bees also followed Him singing His glories like great Gandharvas.

Thereafter Sri Krishna was sprinkled with water by those youthful Gopis who looked at Him affectionately and smilingly.

The celestials showered flowers from their aerial cars and sang His praises. Thus the Lord who finds delight in His own Self sported in the Yamuna like the leader of elephants.

Then Sri Krishna came out of the water and entered the groves on the bank of the Yamuna surrounded by bees and the Gopis. He sported like an elephant with a pleasant breeze bearing the fragrance of the flowers of land water.

The full moon spread her bright and silvery rays all over the earth. The night exhibited all the pleasant features of autumnal season as depicted by poets. The Lord spent the nights, brilliant with moonlight, in the company of the devoted Gopis.

King Parikshit said: "O sage; the glorious Lord of the universe did incarnate Himself by a portion only to establish Dharma (righteousness) and uproot Adharma (unrighteousness). He is the author, the teacher and the defender of Dharma. He must set the example. How then did He choose to act against Dharma by making love with others' wives and touching them? Bhagavan Sri Krishna is the Perfect Being. He has nothing to desire or gain. He has done what is detestable. Why did he perpetrate this unworthy act? What could be His idea? O holy sage! Please remove my doubt on this point."

Suka Deva replied: "O King! Even the Lords of beings are seen now and then to violate Dharma and perform daring acts. But such acts do not affect those powerful beings. It does not become an evil act on the part of great spiritual beings. Fire consumes everything but remains untouched by their evils. It is ever pure.

"But the weak man who is not a master of his passions, who is a slave of his body should never think of such acts, far less perform them. If he does such acts through ignorance, he is sure to be destroyed, even as a man—except Rudra—meets with destruction having drunk poison. It is only Rudra who could drink the poison that came out of the ocean of milk.

"The utterances of those possessed of divine wisdom

should be regarded as truth. Man's conduct should be regulated according to them. Their deeds are only sometimes true. They lead an exceptional life which is governed by extraordinary considerations and unusual conditions. It is not meant always as an example for ordinary men. An intelligent man should act up to their words or precepts or teachings. They are meant for the good of people.

"Those who are free from egoism have nothing to gain by doing what is declared good, nor have anything to lose by doing an improper act or acting to the contrary.

"They live above good and evil, virtue and vice. When such is the case with those powerful beings, what is good and what is bad to Him who is the Lord of all beings? What wonder, the mortals and other lower animals and all that are fit to be ruled, will have nothing to do with pious and impious acts? How can the conduct of the Supreme Lord of the Universe be judged by the ordinary human standard of good and evil?

"By devotion to His feet and by power of Yoga, even sages are freed from the bonds of good and evil. They are not fettered by the consequences of their actions or ties of Karma. They act as they like. How then can any bondage be ascribed to the glorious Lord who has simply assumed a form at His own free will for the benefit of mankind?

"He is present in the hearts of the Gopis and their husbands and in the hearts of all other embodied beings. He is the Ruler of all things. He assumed a body only for His Lila or sporting. He assumed a human form for bestowing His grace on His devotees and exhibited those sports, the hearing of which creates devotion in man towards Him.

"O Parikshit! The men of Vraja never indeed found fault with Sri Krishna, because they were kept spell-bound by the Lord's supreme power (Yoga Maya) and found their wives always by their side."

The night came to its close. The dawn was approaching.

The Gopis who were devoted to their Lord reluctantly went back to their respective abodes as desired by Sri Krishna.

He who faithfully listens to, or recites, or expounds, this sportful play of Sri Krishna with the women of Vraja, obtains intense devotion to the Lord, attains wisdom and very soon gets freed from the disease of the heart known as lust. He quickly destroys his desires that are the maladies of the mind. He subdues his self and is freed from all ills that affect his heart. He annihilates the sensual impulse for ever.

Part II

TEACHINGS

KRISHNA AND UDDHAVA

Brahma and other Devas went to Dwaraka. Brahma said, "O Lord! You graced our request to protect the world, which was overrun by wicked kings by taking an incarnation in the line of Yadus. All that we prayed for have been done. It is over a hundred and twenty-five years since Thou didst appear in the line of Yadus. That line is also well-nigh extinguished. Now come back to Thy own abode."

The Lord said, "Just now the destruction of the Yadavas has begun by the curse of Brahmins. When this is finished, I shall go to My region." Brahma returned to his abode.

The Lord said to the aged Yadus, "There are unusual evil omens on every side. There has been severe curse of Brahmins on our race. Let us this very day go to the very sacred place of Prabhasa." The Yadavas made preparations for going to Prabhasa.

Uddhava noticed the evil portents and heard what Sri Krishna said. He said to Sri Krishna, "O Lord! Thou shalt leave this earth as soon as the Yadus are destroyed. O Kesava! I cannot bear to leave Thy lotus-like feet even for half a moment. O Lord, take me also to Thy abode."

Sri Krishna replied, "What you say is truly going to happen. I have indeed accomplished here wholly the purpose of the gods, for which, as prayed for by Brahma, I incarnated as a part of Myself.

"The Yadavas will be killed by mutual quarrel. This town will be swallowed up by the sea within seven days from today.

As soon as I leave this earth, Kali will overtake it and men will become unrighteous. You should not dwell anywhere here.

"Free yourself from all attachments. Give up your affection for your friends, family, wealth, etc. Fix your mind firmly on Me. Roam about over this earth, seeing Me in all beings, looking on all beings with equal eyes. All that you see or grasp with the senses, or understand by your mind, are unreal and evanescent. They are creations of your mind, and Maya.

"This is this, this is that—this conception of difference is only the delusion of a man whose mind is distracted and uncontrolled and is not united to Me. The man of uncontrolled mind falls into the error that there is plurality of objects. This error leads to merit and demerit, or right and wrong, good and evil. The uncontrolled Jiva, who is bewildered and deluded by this apparent diversity created by the natural outward tendency of the senses, fancies himself as a separate unit in the world and begins to entertain desires and enjoys sensual objects. Duty, non-performance of duty and the performance of forbidden acts (Karma, Akarma and Vikarma) result from this delusion of diversity caused by the mind, senses and intellect. The differences of action, inaction and evil action pertain only to the man who has notions of merit and demerit, right and wrong, good and bad. It is the delusion born of conception of difference, that causes the experiences or notions of right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. The Vedas speak of the performance of prescribed work, the non-performance of prohibited work, for those only who have got the ideas of right and wrong, good and bad, merit and demerit. Abandon the sense of egoism. Control your mind and the senses and behold everything in the universe as Brahman, Myself, or your own Self. Realise the essence of your own nature, bliss and harmony with the universe. Behold the widespread universe in the Self and the Self in Me, the Supreme Lord.

"Possessed of knowledge of the purport of the scriptures (Jnana) and realisation of the oneness of the Self and Brahman and of the truth that Brahman is himself (Vijnana) immersed in

the delight of Self-realisation and finding thyself to be the Self of all embodied beings, thou will not experience obstructions or obstacles.

"He who has risen above good and bad does not refrain from doing what is prohibited from a sense of fear of evil consequences nor does he do the prescribed duty in the hope that it will conduce to merit; but he acts only like a child. The sense of right and wrong will be natural in him independently of scriptural teachings. He has destroyed all egoism. The laws of the world do not affect him. He has no more duties to perform. He is above Karma and Karmas cannot touch him. He may, for the instruction of the world, perform works or refrain from forbidden acts. He will exceed the limits of both right and wrong.

"The friend of all beings, calm and quiet at heart, with the firm conviction due to knowledge and Self-realisation and seeing the universe as himself, he no more comes to grief. He is not drawn back to births. He can never be shaken from his pedestal of bliss or get lost. He can never get into the path of Samsara."

Thus instructed by the Lord, the foremost of devotees, Uddhava, eager to know the truth, prostrated himself before Sri Krishna and said, "O Lord of Yoga, the aim, seat and source of Yoga, you have recommended to me complete renunciation of all worldly attachments, the path of renunciation known as Sannyasa, for my liberation. The giving up of desires is not possible for those worldly-minded people who are addicted to sense-objects, and who are not devoted to Thee who art the Self of all. How is it possible to renounce desire all of a sudden or see the world as transitory, for people like me who are immersed in worldliness?

"I have not yet got over the sense of 'I' and 'Mine.' I am a poor creature of clouded understanding. I am passionately attached to this body and its belongings, which are the creation of Thy Maya and regard these as 'I' and 'Mine'. The attachment

towards son, family and body is very strong in me. Tell me, O Lord! How I can easily follow Thy teachings?"

Sri Krishna replied, "Very often in the world, men who have insight into the true nature of the world, who have truly discerned the truth about the world, lift up their self and free themselves from evil inclinations and cravings for worldly objects by their own efforts.

"Atman is indeed the teacher of Self, especially in the case of man, because he finds out the final bliss by direct perception and inference.

"Wise men, well versed in Sankhya (knowledge) and Yoga practices, behold Me quite distinctly as Purusha, pervading all beings and possessing all powers.

"Many are the bodies created with one, two, three or four feet or many feet, as well as without feet; of these the human body is the most beloved of Me. For, in this human body, men who have controlled their mind and senses, who practise Yoga, who are fixed in meditation, truly find Me out, the Supreme Ruler who cannot be perceived or found out by means of the attributes such as the intellect, etc. that are perceived and by means of inference through those indications.

"On this subject a story of ancient times is also told in illustration. It is a conversation between an Avadhuta and Yadu of great prowess and intelligence, the son of Yayati and grandson of Nahusha, powerful kings of lunar race (ancestors of Sri Krishna)."

AVADHOOTA'S STORY

Yadu who was versed in religion saw a young Brahmin Sannyasin, full of wisdom, wandering about fearlessly and put him the following question as Yadu was eager to know Dharma.

Yadu asked, "O Sage! How did you, doing nothing get this clear wisdom and light by which you were able to give up all attachments and roam like a child fearlessly in perfect bliss?

"Generally in this world people exert themselves for

virtue, wealth, desire and enquire about the Atman only with the motive of attaining longevity, fame and wealth. You are able-bodied, full of wisdom and skill and good-looking. Your speech is sweet and is like nectar and yet you neither work nor exert in the least. You like nothing. People in this world are scorched by the fire of lust and greed. You are not at all afflicted by the fire. You appear self-satisfied and blissful, just as an elephant immersed in the cool waters of the Ganga does not feel the heat of the forest fire on the bank. Please enlighten me as to the source of your joy or bliss. Tell me how you derive bliss in your self alone, untouched by sense objects and living a solitary life? You have neither family nor sensual enjoyment. Whence then is your bliss?"

Sri Krishna said, "Being thus asked and honoured by the intelligent Yadu who has devoted to Brahmins, the noble Brahmin spoke to the king who stood bending in reverence."

The Brahmin said, "Many are my preceptors, O King, whom I resorted to through my own understanding; with the wisdom imbibed from them I roam about on this earth free from attachments. Listen who they are.

"The earth, air, sky (Akasa), water, fire, the moon, the sun, the pigeon, the python, the sea, the moth, the bee, the elephant, the honey-gatherer, the deer, the fish, the dancing girl Pingala, the osprey (raven, Kurara), the child, the maiden, the arrow-maker, the serpent, the spider, the beetle (the wasp)—these, O King, are my twenty-four Gurus or teachers whom I have resorted to. I have learnt all my lessons from their characteristic traits. I will now narrate what I learnt from each of them.

"A wise man should not swerve from the path of righteousness, though he is oppressed by creatures who are themselves under the direction of providence. This forbearance I have learnt from the earth. I have learnt from the mountain, which is a part of the earth, that all our actions should be for the good of others, and that our very existence is for the sake of others. I have learnt from the tree, which is also a part of the earth, that I should be at the disposal of others.

"The sage should be content with mere supporting his life. He should never long for what gratifies the senses so that knowledge may not be destroyed and the mind may not be dissipated on worthless objects.

"The Yogi should not be attached to the objects, like the air, although he is placed in the midst of objects with different attributes and though he is placed in the physical body. His mind should remain unaffected by the good and evil consequences of the objects, just as the air remains unaffected by the good or bad odour of objects over which it blows. The soul enters the body and the attributes of the body seem to be its own, but it is not so. The air is charged with odour but the odour is not the attribute of the air. This I have learnt from the outside air.

"I have learnt from the Prana (vital air) that one should eat to live and not live to eat. He should not eat to give strength and nourishment to the senses. The food should be just sufficient to feed the flame of life.

"Atman is all-pervading. It is not affected by the body and the bodily attributes. This I have learnt from Akasa which is all-pervading and is not affected by clouds and other objects. Even though the sage lives in the body, he should contemplate through his identity with Self or Atman which is all-pervading like the sky (Akasa), which runs as a substratum or a thread in the garland of flowers through all movable and immovable objects, which is not subject to any limitation in respect of time and place and which is not touched by anything else.

"Naturally pure, smooth and sweet is water. So is the sage among men. He, like unto holy waters, purifies others by mere sight, touch and the utterance of His name. This I have learnt from water.

"Bright, powerful in knowledge, and glowing with asceticism, with no receptacle for food except the belly and eating everything, the sage, like fire, is not polluted thereby. Sometimes he remains unnoticed. Sometimes he becomes known to those who desire welfare. He eats the food offered to

him by pious devotees and burns up their past and future evils or impurities.

"Fire is the same and only one, though it enters fuels of various sorts. Just as fire burns in a triangular, circular, rectangular or other shapes, according to the shape and size of the wood, so also the Lord of the Universe, who has created the world and entered into all beings, appears different because of the different bodies (Upadhis) in which He resides. He enters this Universe of various objects, high and low, created by His own Maya and appears to be like everyone of those objects, just as fire does in different kinds of fuel. Birth and death are for the body and not for the Atman, and are caused by time, just as the flames are subjected to change but not the fire.

"The waning or waxing conditions of the moon are due, not to any change in the substance or luminosity of the moon, but, to the fact that only part of the sun's rays get reflected by it. I learnt therefore that the birth, growth, decay, death, etc. are states of the body and not of Atman which is illimitable, birthless and deathless. The moon remains as it is, only there is an apparent change over it owing to astronomical motions.

"The sun draws water by its rays and gives it all away in time. The sage takes in order to give but not in order to add to his own possessions. Just as the sun, reflected in various pots of water, appears to the ignorant as many, so also the Atman appears as such in different bodies on account of the Upadhis caused by the reflection through the mind.

"Too much attachment is bad. One should not have too much affection or attachment for anyone. Too much attachment towards anything causes one's own destruction. This I have learnt from a pair of pigeons. In a certain forest, on a certain tree, a pigeon built a nest and with his mate lived there for some years. They were much attached to each other in love. They reared their young ones with great affection. One day they left their young ones in the nest and went about in search of food for them. A hunter came and caught the young ones by spreading a net. The parent birds returned to their nest with food. The

mother had too much affection for the young ones. She fell into the net of her own accord. The male pigeon also fell into the net himself. The hunter caught the pigeons with the young ones. He was quite satisfied and went home. Thus the miserable family man, who has not controlled his senses, who has not withdrawn his senses and mind from the worldly objects, who finds delight only in the married life and maintains his family with intense attachment, comes to grief with all his relations like the pigeons (Kapota and Kapoti). He who, attaining a human birth which is like an open gateway to Mukti or the final liberation, is merely attached to the householder's life like the bird, is considered as one who has fallen from his status.

"The pleasures obtained through the avenues of the senses, whether in this world or the next, are transient and fleeting. The wise man never hankers after them.

"The huge Ajagara serpent remains where he is and is content with whatever food that comes to him. Like the Ajagara, one should make no effort but only swallow the mouthful that is brought to him by chance, delicious or distasteful, much or little. If no food reaches him, he should lie quiet even for a long time without any food and without any exertion to get it; because, he should, like the Ajagara, subsist on what providence brings to him or destiny decrees. Holding still the body endowed with energy, fortitude and strength, he should lie wide awake and not exert, though he has sound organs.

"The sage should be calm, profound or deep, difficult to fathom, illimitable and immovable or not liable to be perturbed by worldly circumstances like the tranquil ocean. The ocean may receive volumes of water from the rivers at times or may receive no water at other times but it remains the same. Even so, the sage who has set his heart upon the Lord, neither swells with joy when he has an abundance of enjoyable objects, nor shrinks with sorrow when he has none.

"The man of uncontrolled senses, seeing a woman, the God's Maya (enchantment created by the Lord) and being

allured by her behaviour and feelings, falls into the blinding darkness and comes to grief, just as the moth falls into the fire. The fool, who with his mind allured by women, gold ornaments, clothes and other things created by Maya, regards them as objects of enjoyment, loses his correct vision and perishes like a moth.

"The sage should wander from house to house taking handfuls from each house till he gets just enough food for his sustenance, without making any house feel burdened, like the bee which gathers honey from all flowers.

"The intelligent man should extract the essence from all scriptures, great or small, just as the bee does from flowers. The sage should not store food for the evening or the next day; the hands or the stomach should be his vessel; he should not hoard like the bee. He who stores food is destroyed with his store like the bee.

"The Sannyasin should not touch even the wooden figure of a young woman even with his feet. If he does so, he would be caught as is the elephant through its attachment for the touch of the she-elephant. The wise man should shun the company of women as if it were death to him; for he would be killed like a weak elephant by other elephants.

"The miser who hoards wealth, neither gives nor enjoys his riches. Whatever he collects with difficulty is carried away by some one else, just as the collector of honey carries away the honey collected by the bees.

"Like the collector of honey, the Sannyasin first enjoys those good things which householders collect through hard-earned wealth in order to enjoy.

"The ascetic should not listen to sensuous music. He should learn a lesson from the deer which, enamoured by the hunters' music, gets ensnared. The sage Rishyasringa, born of deer, listened to the sensuous music of women and was easily entrapped by them. He became a toy or a playmate in their hands.

"Just as a fish that is attracted by baits falls an easy victim to the bait by means of the hook, so also the foolish man who allows his sense of taste to overpower him, who is stupefied with the charms of taste and delicacies by the turbulent and greedy tongue, meets with death. Tongue or the love of taste is most difficult to conquer. If the sense of taste is controlled, all other senses are controlled. One cannot become master of his organs until he controls the organ of taste. No man can be said to have conquered his senses unless his organ of taste is completely curbed. Thoughtful men soon subdue their senses by fasting.

"There was formerly in the city of Videhas a public woman called Pingala. I have learnt something from her. Listen to it, O King! One day she put on beautiful dress and waited at the door of her house in the evening, to receive and bargain customers for the night. She invited some persons but sent them away as she thought some other wealthy man would richly pay her. With this inordinate desire she waited sleepless at the door, now going in, now coming out, till it was midnight. Through this anxious expectation of money, she spent the night in a fever of hope, worry and disappointment. She felt extreme disgust for her life of greed and desire which made her unhappy.

"In her utter disappointment she sang, 'Indifference to worldly objects is like a sword to cut asunder a man's fetters of expectation or cords of desires. One does not wish to get rid of the bondage of the body until he has become disgusted, just as no man without insight into the truth or knowledge could rid himself of the notions of 'I' and 'Mine' or the clinging to the objects.' Pingala said, 'Lo! How deluded am I for want of control over my mind! How foolish am I to seek the satisfaction of desires from such creatures as men!

"Discarding Lord Narayana or the Eternal Atman, seated near in my heart, who is a fit lover and can satisfy me, who can give me everlasting bliss and wealth, I am courting a puny man who cannot satisfy my desires and who causes misery, fear, disease, grief and infatuation. I have been indeed very stupid.

"Oh! In vain I have afflicted my soul by this most reproachable mode of living, viz. that of a public woman; I have sought wealth and pleasure from pitiable mortals, who are greedy and slaves of women, by selling my body to them.

"Who, other than myself, would be taken to this house which is built of bones which are like beams, rafters and posts of a house, which is covered over with skin, hair and nails, which is furnished with nine openings for discharging filth and filled with offal and urine?

"In this town of Videha, full of wise beings, I am the only woman who has tied her hopes, happiness and desire, to the body. I am the only silly being or wicked woman who seeks any other source of enjoyment or object of desire than the Lord who bestows Self-realisation.

"He is the true friend, protector, Lord, most beloved one, the master and the very Self or Atman of all embodied beings; winning Him over, by giving up the body to Him, I shall enjoy His company like Lakshmi and find everlasting happiness in Him alone.

"What is the use of serving others? The favours of gods and mortals are limited by time, capacity and various other obstacles. What delight can the sense-objects, men or the gods confer on women? All have a beginning and an end.

"Surely I must have done something in my previous births to propitiate Vishnu, for it is by His grace alone that this Vairagya (dispassion or disgust) cutting at the root of all unholy desires, has arisen in my mind. Through His grace only, I have attained the way to everlasting happiness and peace.

"If the Lord had not been propitious to me, such disappointments, as lead to renunciation and dispassion, would not have arisen, which enable one to abandon all attachments and attain happiness.

"I accept, with humble devotion, this gift of the Lord on my head. I now abandon all vain expectations and evil desires and take refuge in the Supreme Lord. Contented, full of faith in

the Lord, living on what chance brings to me, I shall enjoy the eternal bliss of the Lord, Paramatman. Who else but the Lord can save this Jiva who has fallen into the deep pit of Samsara (births and deaths), with eyes blinded by the objects, with the vision robbed by the senses, and who is swallowed up by the serpent of Time.

"When one realises the evanescence of this universe, when he beholds the universe in the jaws of the serpent of Time, he will surely and firmly scorn the fleeting, doubtful, worthless, illusory pleasures of this world and the next. He will become very cautious, turn himself away from the illusory sense-objects and will seek repose in the eternal bliss of his own Atman. When one becomes disgusted with everything else, Atman is the protector of Atman, the Self alone is the saviour of oneself."

The Brahmin said, "Pingala having thus determined in her mind, and fixed her mind on the Lord, gave up all hopes and expectations due to hankering for lovers, sat on her bed with a serene mind. She abandoned all unholy desires that troubled her and became happy. She slept soundly with a tranquil mind. It is hope that gives us trouble. Without hope we are happy. Desires, hopes and expectations are the source of grief. Abandonment of all expectations and desires is the greatest bliss. It is the happiest state. Vairagya is the source of bliss as can be seen from Pingala who slept happily, casting aside the hankering for lovers.

"The source for affliction and misery is indeed the acquisition of anything whatsoever that men hold as dearest. But that man who knows this truth, gives up all possession and does not think of any acquisition and attains unlimited happiness.

"An osprey (Kurara—a bird of prey) had a piece of flesh in its mouth. The stronger birds that had no flesh pounced upon it, but the Kurara dropped the piece of flesh and became happy. Renunciation of dear objects is good. It gives peace.

"I do not care for honour or dishonour. I do not think of the

house, wife or children. I sport in Atman and take delight in Atman and roam on earth like a child.

"Only two are free from anxieties and immersed in the highest bliss—the child that knows nothing and the man who has realised the Supreme Being, who is beyond the influence of the Gunas.

"In a certain place, a girl herself had to attend to the comforts of those who visited the house to ask her in marriage when her relations had gone out to some other place. As she was husking the paddy for their meal in a solitary place, the conch bangles on her wrists made a great noise. The intelligent girl thought it disgraceful and was very much ashamed of her poverty. She thought that the party might detect her poor condition. She broke the bracelets one by one, leaving only two on each hand. Even those two bracelets produced a sound when she went on husking. So she removed one of these also. No sound was then produced from the remaining one though she continued husking.

"Wandering over the world in search of truth and experiences, I learnt from the girl's experience the following instructions. Where many dwell together there would be quarrel. Even between two people there would be occasion for debate or talk. Therefore, one should live alone like the single bangle on the hand of the girl.

"Having controlled the breath and practised firmness in seat, one should, like an archer taking his aim, fix or centre the mind on the Supreme Self. He should be on the alert to keep the mind steady through renunciation, constant application and systematic practice. Just as the fire exhausts itself when the fuel is consumed, so also the mind firmly checked in its outward wanderings, becomes oblivious of the diversities caused by the Gunas, slowly shakes off the bonds of Karma, abandons gradually the impulsions to work, gets free from Rajas and Tamas through increased Sattva, subsides and attains tranquillity in the absence of the fuel of Gunas and their products and the sense-impressions which feed it. It becomes

one with the object of meditation. It becomes entirely absorbed in the object of contemplation. Then having his mind entirely absorbed in the Atman, he does not see anything else at that time, inside or outside, just as the arrow-maker with his mind absorbed in making the arrow, did not see the king passing by his side. I have learnt concentration of mind from the arrow-maker.

"The wise man should wander alone. He should be homeless and be ever alert. He should resort to a cave and should not exhibit his real worth. He should remain without friends. He should indulge in as little speech as possible.

"It is very troublesome and useless for an ascetic to build a house as his body is fleeting and perishable. Just as the serpent enters and makes itself comfortable in any hole dug by others, so also he should make himself comfortable at every chance residence or place that comes in his way. He should have no fixed abode.

"Just as the spider brings the thread out of itself, spreads out the web, sports in it and devours it itself, so also the Lord creates the universe out of Himself through His Maya consisting of three Gunas, sports in it and takes it back again into Himself.

"Whatever form a man constantly thinks of through love, hatred or fear, that he attains in course of time through concentration on the form he thinks about, just as a worm becomes the wasp.

"Thus from the above twenty-four preceptors I have learnt the various instructions. Now listen, O king, to what I have learnt from my own body. My own body is also my Guru. I have learnt from it dispassion, discrimination and non-attachment. It is ever undergoing change and is evanescent. It is born only to die. Constant misery is its lot. It becomes the seat of egoism. One has to toil to satisfy its wants. This brings grief and sorrow. I reflect on Truth with its help. I know the Truth by a discriminative study of the body. I regard it as not mine and so I

feel no attachment for it. The body belongs to the dogs and jackals who devour it after death.

"For the sake of the comforts of the body, a person maintains a wife, domestic animals, servants, children, home and relations and amasses wealth with great difficulty. This body perishes in the end like a tree, creating the seed of a fresh body for him.

"The tongue drags him to one side and thirst to another; the organ of reproduction to some other; the skin, stomach and ear in some other direction; the sense of smell in one direction, the fickle eye to something else, the tendency for work draws to something else, every other physical organ in a different direction of activity. The senses suck his very life blood, even as the many wives of one husband.

"The Lord created various bodies such as trees, reptiles, beasts, birds, insects and fish but was not satisfied with these. Then He made the human body, which is endowed with intellect, for realising Brahman and He was extremely delighted.

"The wise man, having obtained after many births this extremely rare human body which though transient and frail is yet conducive to the attainment of high purpose, viz. Moksha or the final emancipation, should quickly endeavour to attain liberation or the highest good before it falls a prey to death; for sense-enjoyment may be had indeed in any body.

"Thus learning from my body Vairagya, or distaste or aversion towards worldly pleasures and a knowledge of the real bliss of my nature which is essentially divine, I wander over the world without egoism and attachment, with the light of true wisdom as my light.

"Verily, the knowledge derived from one preceptor cannot be very firm and sufficiently full; because this Brahman, though one without a second, is variously sung by Rishis."

Sri Krishna said, "The Brahmin having said so much, took leave of Yadu who paid him all proper reverence and went

away. Our ancestor Yadu also took to heart the instructions of the sage, gave up all attachments and attained equanimity of mind and tranquillity."

SAMSARA

[*Sri Krishna explains to Uddhava how the Jiva falls into Samsara. The school of Jaimini is refuted*]

Sri Krishna said: The man who has taken refuge in Me should attend to his particular duties as taught by Me and observe the course of conduct laid down for his caste, order of life or family, without attachment and without cherishing desires.

"With a mind, purified by the performance of duties, he should, meditating on the Truth, notice carefully how the efforts prove a failure on the part of those who seek worldly objects and are attached to them, regarding them as real.

"Just as the vision of objects of a sleeping man and of one who indulges in fancies, are not real, so also the objects of desires or the notion of differences in objects outside, which is caused by the sense-organs or Gunas, are unreal.

"Actions are fourfold (1) Kamya Karma—those actions which are done for the attainment of selfish desires, (2) Nishiddha Karma—those actions that are prohibited by the scriptures, (3) Nitya Karma—those that are required to be daily performed such as Sandhya, (4) Naimittika Karma—those that are required to be performed on certain occasions, such as Sraaddha. The first two are Pravritta or selfish Karmas. The Smritis declare that those who want Moksha or liberation must not perform Pravritta Karma. But they should perform Nitya and Naimittika Karmas, as their non-performance may give rise to obstacles.

"One ought to follow the Nivritti Karma, (Nitya and Naimittika) and full of devotion to Me, desist from Pravritta Karmas which lead to rebirths. He should start the enquiry into Truth and should not pay any attention to the injunctions of

Work. When one enters the path of wisdom, he need not care much even for Nivritti Karma.

"Being fixed on Me, intent on Me, he should always practise Yamas and sometimes Niyamas also. He should serve the preceptor, who is of serene mind, who is learned in the Vedas, who is devoted to Me, who is full of Me, who has become one with Me, and who has realised Me as his own Self.

"He should be free from pride, envy, jealousy, without attachment, firmly devoted to the Guru, free from impatience and intent upon knowing the Truth. He should not find fault with any and should not indulge in unnecessary or idle talk. He should be indifferent to his wife, children, house, lands, kith and kin, wealth, etc. He should see all alike, because Atman is the same everywhere and through everything the Atman shines.

"This Atman, the self-luminous witness, is distinct from the gross and subtle bodies, just as the fire that burns and illumines is different from the wood that is burnt and illuminated. Just as fire which enters the fuel assumes the attributes of the fuel such as origin, smallness, greatness and diversity, so also does the distinct Atman assume the qualities of the body.

"This body, which is created by the Gunas of the Maya of the Lord, constitutes the Samsara. It is the cause of man's transmigration. The knowledge of Atman cuts off the course of rebirths. Therefore, one should realise the Supreme Self in his own Self. He should gradually get rid of the sense or idea that the phenomenal world and the bodies, gross and subtle, are real. He should fully realise also that Atman is separate and is beyond the body.

"The preceptor should be regarded as the main or lower piece of the two pieces of wood (Arani) used for kindling the sacred fire and the pupil the upper one; instruction is the piece (middle portion) that connects them, and knowledge is the union that brings happiness. The pure wisdom, which is thus acquired from the Guru removes the Maya or delusion that is

produced by the Gunas and completely burns up the Gunas themselves, which constitute the universe and is itself extinguished also, like fire without fuel.

[*The view of the Mimamsakas is now described. It is refuted also. According to this school of thought, the souls are real and many. They do not believe in Isvara. Heaven is their goal. Karma is everything for them. Karma gives fruits. There is no necessity for a dispenser or Lord.*]

"If you think that the doers of actions and experiencers of pleasures and pains are many or that the heaven, time, scriptures and souls are eternal or that the existence of all objects is real and eternal and that knowledge arises and is diverse according to the form of objects perceived—even then all creatures are repeatedly subjected to the different states of birth and death on account of their relation to the body and the force of the divisions of Time.

"Even in this case, there is no freedom on the part of the doers of action and the experiencers of pleasure and pain. What high purpose would then fall to the lot of one who is not independent? Who, in seeking his highest goal or good, would worship one who is dependent on others ?

"There is no happiness even to learned men, and ignorant people are sometimes without the least misery. There is only egoism on the part of those who think they are happy on account of their skill in performing Vedic Karmas. It is mere vanity to speak about the efficacy of Karma. Even if they know how to attain pleasure and destroy misery, they certainly do not know the means by which they can get over death. When death is near at hand, what objects of enjoyment can give pleasure to man? Nothing gives pleasure to one who is being conducted to the place of execution.

"The enjoyments in heaven promised by the Vedas are also transient. They are not unalloyed pleasures. Even in Svarga, there are jealousy, rivalry, destruction, decay, fault-finding, inequalities and consequent uneasiness. There is an end for the

enjoyments. As the desire for attaining the enjoyments of heaven is attended by various obstacles, it is fruitless like agriculture. Therefore even Svarga is of no good.

"The man who has propitiated the gods by sacrifices goes to the Heaven acquired by such sacrifices, and enjoys the celestial pleasures like a Deva. He puts on beautiful dress and moves in the aerial car (Vimana), acquired by his own good actions, in the company of celestial nymphs and is praised by Gandharvas. The chariot moves at his will. It is adorned with little bells. He whiles away his time with the celestial damsels in the gardens of the gods and does not think of his fall. He enjoys in heaven till the merits of his good actions are exhausted. When the merit is exhausted, he falls down by the force of time even against his will.

"If a man indulges in the prohibited acts through evil company, if his senses are not controlled, if he is lustful, indiscriminate, greedy, if he is addicted to women, if he causes injury to creatures, if he kills animals in violation of Sastras and worships ghosts and demons, then he helplessly goes to various hells and finds there intense Tamas. He enters horrible Tamasic bodies.

"Therefore, Karma (selfish action) ends in misery only. By performing Karma with the body, men again get new bodies. What happiness is there in the possession of this transitory body? What pleasure can there be in thus indulging in action, when one knows that the body is mortal?

The heavenly spheres and their rulers, who live up to a Kalpa, are afraid of Me; even Brahma who lives for two Parardhas (ten thousand billions of years) has fear of Me.

"Therefore, Pravritti Marga leads to miseries, sorrows and pains. It should be shunned. Nivritti Marga, which leads to eternal happiness and immortality, should be resorted to.

"The organs do actions, and the Gunas direct the organs. The Jiva enjoys the fruits of his actions being connected with the Gunas and the organs.

"As long as there is difference or disturbance of equilibrium in the Gunas, so long there is plurality in Atman,or diversity of the soul. As long as there is plurality or diversity of the soul, so long it is dependent on others. So long as Jiva is dependent, it has fear from the Lord. Therefore those who take to this course of Karma are given up to sorrow and are deluded.

"I am called as Time, Soul, Vedas, Universe, Heaven, Temperament, Righteousness, Law, etc.; when the equilibrium of the Gunas is disturbed, when the Gunas are mixed in different proportions."

Uddhava said: "O Lord! How is it that Brahman is not bound by the qualities of the body though He is in them? So long as the Jiva dwells in the transformations of the Gunas forming the body, how can he help not being bound by those qualities? If he is free like Akasa, how does he get into bondage?

"What are the signs or characteristics of free and bound souls? How do they live and enjoy? What or how do they eat? How do they attend to their bodily functions? How do they lie, or sit, or go? Please enlighten me on the above points. You are Omniscient. You are the foremost One among those who know the answers to questions. Is the same soul ever in bondage or ever in liberation?

BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

"The soul is said to be bound or free with reference to Gunas but it is not so in reality. As the Gunas have their origin in Maya, as they are the creation of Maya, there is neither bondage nor liberation.

"Sorrow and delusion, joy and grief, even the taking of a body—these are all due to Maya. Just as a dream is only an illusory fiction of the mind, so also the course of birth or Samsara is not real.

"O highly intelligent one! The Jiva who is My part, is bound without beginning on account of ignorance and is liberated through knowledge. He is in bondage as, because of

his ignorance, he fancies he is separate from Me. He becomes free when he gets the knowledge that he and I are one.

"Now I shall tell you the difference between the bound and the liberated soul, living in the same body with entirely opposite qualities.

"Two birds which look alike (for both are manifestation of consciousness) and are companions, have by chance built their nest in the same tree (the body). One of these (the Jiva) eats the fruits (the results of his actions reaped in the body) of that tree, while the other (Isvara) though not taking any fruit is greater in strength and is the mightier of the two.

"He who does not eat the fruits (of Karma) is wise. He knows himself as well as the other, but not he who eats the fruits. He who is joined with Avidya (ignorance) is always bound, while He who is joined with Vidya or He (Isvara) who is full of knowledge, is eternally free.

"The wise one is not conditioned by the body, though he is in the body, like a man aroused from dream. But the foolish man who has a wrong notion is conditioned by the body like one in the dreaming state. The ignorant man identifies himself with the body, like the man in dream.

"The senses perceive the objects of the senses. The wise one does not identify himself with these. He is, therefore, not affected by them.

"The ignorant man, however, while dwelling in this body which is under the control of past actions, in which the senses act, thinks that he is the doer and becomes thus bound down.

"The wise one, being thus free from attachment in such acts as sleeping, sitting, walking, bathing, seeing, touching, smelling, eating, hearing, etc. does not bind himself like the ignorant man; for, in those acts he realises that the Gunas (senses) perceive and not his Self. He does not identify himself with them. He stands as a silent witness of the activities or experiences of the organs. Even though he is living in the midst of Prakriti, still he is untouched by it like the sky, the sun and the

air. He dwells in the body, but is not attached to it. The sun becomes reflected in water, but is not attached to water. The air moves about all around, but does not become attached to any object. Akasa is all-pervading, but it is not attached to anything.

"By the force of dispassion, the vision becomes clear. All doubts are removed. The wise one rises as it were from sleep and withdraws himself from the diversities of the body and other material objects. His doubts are cleared by the eye of wisdom that the Jiva is Brahman, his desires are cut away by the sword of non-attachment or Vairagya; he sees Brahman everywhere, and is not any more deluded by the appearance of diversity or perplexity. Just as the man who awakes from a dream is no more deluded by the experiences he went through in the dream, so the wise man is never again deluded by multiplicity.

"He whose breaths, the senses, mind and intellect do their functions without thoughts of purpose or plans, is freed from the attributes of the body though dwelling in the body. He is free from the bonds of Karma, though still enveloped by the body.

"He who is not affected in the least when he is injured by others and worshipped by anybody is a wise man. He neither praises nor blames others for their good or bad deeds or words. He is free from merits and demerits. He knows no merits or demerits. He looks on all with an equal eye. He does not do anything, he does not say anything, he does not think on anything, good or bad. He finds delight in his own Atman. He is immersed in his own bliss of the Self and wanders about like an inert matter heedless of the outside world.

"If a man well versed in the Vedas is not fixed in Brahman, if he has no direct intuitive Self-realisation, his labour becomes fruitless like that of a man who keeps a breeding cow that bears no calf.

"He who maintains a cow that has ceased to yield milk, an unchaste wife, a body that is under another's control, a worthless and a wicked son, wealth which is not bestowed on

deserving people, and speech in which My glory does not find expression, is one who goes from misery to misery.

"The wise man ought not to indulge in that barren speech in which there is no mention of My glorious sacred deeds in relation to the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world or to My sportful Avataras or births which are liked by the people very much.

"One should remove the delusion of diversity in Atman through such discrimination. He should desist from everything else and should stop all activities. If thou art not able to fix the mind steadily on the Brahman, then perform all actions without expectation for fruits, offering them to Me unconditionally.

[*Now Sri Krishna proceeds to inculcate Bhakti or devotion.*]

"O Uddhava! The man of faith attains unswerving devotion towards Me, the Eternal One, by listening to the very auspicious stories of Mine that purify the worlds, by singing constantly, by remembering My deeds and lives, by doing all actions for My sake, by taking Me as his sole refuge and by pursuing duty, desire and wealth for My sake only.

"He becomes my devout worshipper, attaining devotion for Me through association with the sages. He surely attains to Me as indicated by the sages."

SADHU AND BHAKTI

Uddhava said: "O most glorious Lord! Who according to Thee is a Sadhu? What sort of Sadhu does Thou prefer most? What devotion would prove fruitful towards Thee? What sort of Bhakti approved by Rishis, such as Narada and others, is most acceptable to Thee?

"O Ruler of all persons, O Lord of the universe, may it please Thee to tell this to me, for I have fallen at Thy feet. I am devoted to Thee and I have surrendered myself to Thee! O Lord! Thou art the Supreme Brahman, infinite like the sky, the

Purusha who is beyond the Maya and the Gunas. Thou art incarnated on earth of your own free will."

Sri Krishna said, "Compassionate, without ill-will or enmity to any creature, forbearing, enduring, firm in truth, of faultless mind, same to all, doing good to all with his mind untainted by desires, self-restrained, mild, pure, gentle and pious, without possessions, penniless, physically inactive, moderate in food and drink, with controlled mind, firm, seeking refuge in Me, and meditative, careful, vigilant, of a balanced mind, full of fortitude, having control over the sixfold waves (hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, decay and death), not seeking respect from others but respecting others, expert, friendly, merciful, wise—such is a Sadhu or sage.

"He who, knowing My injunctions and prohibitions in the performance of one's own Dharma or duties of life, even abandons them all for My sake and worships Me, is the best of all Sadhus.

"Those who, knowing or not knowing, 'who I am, what I am and how much and what sort I am,' worship Me with their mind and heart not drawn to any one else, are in My opinion the best of My devotees.

"To see, touch and worship My symbols or images and My devotees, to serve and adore them; the humble recital of My glory and of My deeds; intense eagerness and faith in listening to My stories, meditating on Me, offering oneself in My service; the recounting of My births and work, the observance of My special days, festivities in My temples with songs, dance and instrumental music in company; processions, making offerings of worship on all special days of the year, initiation according to Vedic rites and to keep vows in My honour; enthusiasm in installing My images for worship and endeavour with his own means or with others help in constructing gardens, parks, orchards, playgrounds, and temples, dedicated to Me; to do service in My temple like a servant such as sweeping, washing and decorating it with figures and drawings; to be free from pride and hypocrisy; not bragging but keeping silent about his

own good deeds, not using even a light offered to Me for any private purpose or selfish ends—these are the sure ways for obtaining My grace and eternal bliss. These are the indications of Bhakti. These will instil devotion in one's heart.

"Whatever is most desired by the people in general and whatever is intensely liked by oneself should be offered to Me. That offering will tend to everlasting good or infinite results.

"The sun, the fire, the Brahmana, the cow, the Vaishnava (devotee), the sky, air, water, earth, the heart and all beings—these, O friend, are the objects wherein to worship Me. These are the shrines for My worship. These are the eleven places for My worship.

"I am to be worshipped in the sun through Vedic hymns, in the fire through oblations of ghee, in the Brahmana through hospitality, in the cows by the offer of grass, in the devotee through respect, kind treatment and cordial reception, in the Akasa of the heart through regular meditation, in the air by regarding it as Prana, in water by offerings of libation and with various articles such as water, leaves, flowers, etc. in the earth by sacred Mantras, in the body or one's own Self with eatables, and in all beings, one should worship Me as Kshetrajna, with equal vision.

"In all these abodes or places of worship one should with a serene and concentrated mind, meditate on My benign form with four hands, in which are the conch, disc, mace and lotus. He who thus worships Me through Ishta (making sacrifices) and Purti (construction of tanks, gardens, temples, etc.) with concentration, remembers Me and serves the Sadhus or the righteous, attains perfect devotion to Me.

"O Uddhava! Except by devotion that is acquired through the association of Sadhus there is hardly any other way for salvation, for I am their chief support, goal and resort. O son of Yadus! Now I am going to tell thee this profound secret, even though most confidential, because thou art My servant, friend and companion.

GLORY OF SATSANGA

"I am not so easily attainable by Yoga, Sankhya or discrimination, Dharma, study of the Vedas, Tapas, renunciation, liberal gifts, charitable acts, rites such as Agnihotra, fasts, vows, Yajnas, secret Mantras, resort to pilgrimages, Yamas, Niyamas (moral rules), as Satsanga (company of Sadhus) which puts an end to all attachments.

"It is only by association with the wise and the righteous, that many who were of a Rajasic or Tamasic nature—such as Vritra, son of the sage Twashtri, Prahlada, the Daityas, the Asuras and the Rakshasas, Gandharvas, Apsaras, Nagas, Siddhas, Charanas, Guhyakas and Vidhyadharas, many beasts and birds, and among mankind Vaishyas, Sudras, women and outcastes who are the lowest by birth—have attained Me.

"Vrishaparva, Bali, Bana, Maya, Vibhishana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavan the bear, Gajendra the elephant, Jatayu the vulture, Tuladhara the merchant, Dharmavyadha the fowler, Kubja the hunchbacked perfume-seller, the Gopis in Vraja, the wives of the Brahmanas engaged in sacrifices in Brindavan and others—all these did not study the Vedas, did not sit at the feet of great men of learning for the sake of knowledge, they did not observe any vows or fasts, they did not perform Tapas but they attained Me through the association with saints and Sadhus.

"Through love alone, developed through the company of saints, the Gopis, and even the cows, trees, beasts, serpents, and others of dull-witted nature, became perfected and easily attained Me whom one does not attain by making great endeavours through Yoga or Sankhya, charity, vows, Tapas, sacrifices, teaching and study of the Vedas or renunciation. When I was taken by Akrura to Mathura with Balarama, the Gopis, with their hearts given to Me through intense devotion, were greatly afflicted at heart on account of My separation. Nothing but Me could give them any delight or interest. For the Gopis, those very nights which they spent like a moment with Me their most beloved one, while at Brindavan, became to them, in My absence, like Yugas. With their hearts and minds

fixed on Me, through intense love and attachment, they were not conscious of their bodies or their relatives or what was near or at a distance, just as sages do not know names and forms in the state of Samadhi or superconscious condition like the rivers merged in the waters of the ocean.

"The ignorant Gopis, who were not aware of My real nature as Supreme Brahman took Me as their beloved paramour and yet they attained Me, the Supreme Brahman, by hundreds and thousands, through the power of Satsanga or holy association. Therefore, O Uddhava, abandon injunctions and prohibitions, the course of Pravritta Karma and Nivritta Karma, which is yet to be studied or what is already studied, rise above the rules and counter-rules. Care not for Srutis or Smritis, for biddings and forbiddings. Take refuge in Me alone whole-heartedly and with all devotion—the Atman of all beings. Thou shalt have no fear from any quarter from any cause or causes.

The Lord said: "This Paramatman, who gives life to all, is manifest in the Chakras or centres of the spinal column. He has entered the Muladhara Chakra with the Prana and the subtlest form of sound (Para). After passing through less subtle forms, such as Pasyanti, Madhyama, what are perceptible to the mind only, He at last comes out as very gross sound (Vaikhari) consisting of syllable, pitch and letter, Matra (measures), Svara (accents), and Varna (letters of the alphabet).

[Note: Articulation is the last and grossest expression of divine sound energy. The highest manifestation of sound energy, the primal voice, the divine voice is Para. The Para voice becomes the root ideas or germ thoughts. It is the first manifestation of voice. In Para the sound remains in an undifferentiated form. Para, Pasyanti, Madhyama and Vaikhari are the various gradations of sound. Madhyama is the intermediate unexpressed state of sound. Its seat is heart.

The seat of Pasyanti is navel or the Manipura Chakra. Yogis, who have subtle inner vision, can experience the Pasyanti state of word which has colour and form; which is common for all languages and which has the vibratic

homogeneity of sound. Indians, Europeans, Americans, Japanese, birds, beasts, all experience the same Bhavana of a thing in the Pasyanti state of voice or sound. Gesture is a sort of mute subtle language. It is one and the same for all persons. Any individual of any country will make the same gesture by holding his hand in his mouth in a particular manner when he is thirsty. As one and the same power or Sakti, working through the ears become hearing, through the eyes become seeing, and so forth, the same Pasyanti assumes different forms of sound when materialised. The Lord manifests Himself through His Mayaic power, first as Para Vani in the Muladhara Chakra; then materialises Himself as Pasyanti in the Manipura Chakra at the navel, then as Madhyama in the heart and then eventually as Vaikhari in the throat and mouth. This is the divine descent of His voice. All the Vaikhari is His voice only. It is the voice of Virat Purusha.

Just as fire exists in the wood as latent heat, which through vigorous friction manifests as a spark with the help of the wind, then as small flame and finally as a big blazing fire through oblation of ghee, so is my manifestation in the form of speech. The heat corresponds to the Para Vani, the spark to the Pasyanti, the small flame to the Madhyama and the big blazing fire to the Vaikhari or audible form of sound.]

"Thus the speech is My manifestation. Action, motion, excretion, smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, hearing, cogitation, knowledge, the faculties of desire or will, discrimination, judgment, identification, Sutra or the cosmic intelligence or energy, the modifications of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—all these are similarly My manifestations.

"This Isvara is one, unmanifested or undifferentiated in the beginning. But as He is the resort or support of the three Gunas, as He is the cause of the lotus of the universe, He becomes differentiated in time and appears as many, just as a seed thrown into the earth produces many offshoots and exhibits many forms.

"Just as a piece of cloth exists in threads, so also this

universe rests on the Atman as Its warp and woof. This tree of Samsara is a very old one without a beginning. Activity is its nature. It produces flowers (Karma) and fruits (i.e. enjoyment) and Moksha (the fruits of Karma). It has got two seeds (virtue and vice), a hundred roots (countless desires), three trunks (Sattva, Rajas, Tamas) and eleven minor branches (the ten organs and the mind); it yields five kinds of essence (sound, touch, form, taste and smell); it has a nest for the two birds (Jiva and Paramatman), three barks; the three humours: Vata (wind), Pitta (bile), Sleshma (phlegm) or the nervous, bilious and phlegmatic temperaments; and two fruits (pleasure and pain) and extends up to the Sun. He who goes beyond the Sun's sphere is not subject to rebirth.

"The vultures living in villages (Gridhras, i.e. the greedy householders who are attached to domestic life) eat one of the fruits, i.e. misery; those who live in the forest (Sannyasins) and who are full of discrimination and wisdom and hence called Hamsas (swans) eat the other, i.e. enjoy the eternal bliss of the Atman. He who, through the favour of his Guru, knows the one Lord as becoming many through Maya, knows the Truth and understands the Vedas.

"With the axe of knowledge sharpened by the one-pointed devotion acquired by the service and worship of the Guru, do thou calmly and steadily cut asunder this tree of Samsara and on attaining Paramatman do thou lay down thy weapon, i.e. stop your endeavour to attain Self-realisation."

THE GUNAS

The Lord said: "Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the three qualities of mind and intellect (Prakriti) but not of Atman. Therefore, one should control or subdue through Sattva the other two, and control Sattva by Sattva itself.

"When Sattva grows in man, he attains Dharma or righteousness which takes the form of devotion to Me. Through the use of Sattvic things, Sattva develops and thence Dharma. That Dharma of matchless power which is brought on by an

increase of Sattva destroys Rajas and Tamas. When both of these are destroyed, Adharma which is an outcome of Rajas and Tamas is also quickly destroyed.

"The scriptures, water, men, land, time, work, birth, meditation, Mantras and purificatory ceremonies—these are the ten causes which develop or promote the Sattva Guna. Of these, what the sages praise are Sattvic, what they condemn are Rajasic.

"A man ought to use and associate with only Sattvic things and persons, for the development of Sattva; thence arises Dharma from which knowledge arises and grows till the direct realisation of Atman is attained and all the causes of mundane bondage are totally annihilated.

[*N.B.*—Those scriptures which are Sattvic and which lead to the attainment of Brahman should be studied. Novels and worthless books should not be read. One should not use scents, wine, opium, *cannabis indica,* etc. He should mix with saints and not with worldly-minded people.]

"He should use the holy waters. He should select quiet solitary places, but not highways and gambling houses. Brahmamuhurta or the time before sunrise is preferable for meditation, not that period of time which will cause distraction. The obligatory and unselfish works alone should be performed but not selfish deeds. Initiation into pure form of religion is necessary. Initiation causes a second birth. Meditation should be on the Lord or Nirguna Brahman. Mantras such as OM, Sri Ram, OM Namasivaya, OM Namo Narayanaya, OM Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya are to be preferred, not those which bring worldly prosperity. The mind must be purified.

"By these Sattvic pursuits, Sattva increases. When Sattva prevails in man, the whole nature becomes Sattvic. One experiences perfect serenity which is the essence of Sattva. This is Dharma. Adharma is the opposite of this. It leads to distraction and restlessness. Dharma is followed by wisdom. When the mind is serene, truth is reflected in it, truth is fully

realised. When the Gunas themselves are destroyed, when there is direct intuitive realisation of Brahman, the knower, the knowable and knowledge become one and the same. The Triputi or the triad vanishes.

"Just as the fire that is produced by the friction of the bamboos in a forest burns up the forest and is then extinguished by itself, so also the body which is produced by the disturbance or intermixture of the Gunas is destroyed like the fire. The body destroys the Gunas through knowledge manifested in it."

HOW TO WITHDRAW FROM THE SENSE-OBJECTS

Uddhava said: "O Krishna, generally people know that the objects of the senses lead to misery. How is it they still run after them, like a dog, an ass or a goat?"

The Lord said: "In the heart of an indiscriminating man, the wrong notion of 'I' with regard to body arises; then the terrible Rajas takes possession of the mind, which by its own origin is Sattvic. Doubts and desires arise in the mind which is filled with Rajas. He thinks, 'I should enjoy such and such a thing in such and such a way and so on.' Then the mind dwells upon the excellent attributes of an object 'Oh, how beautiful! What a nice thing,' and gets a strong liking or an inordinate hankering for it.

"The foolish man is overpowered by desires and cravings. He has no control over his senses. As he is deluded by the strong current of Rajas, he knowingly does acts which are seen to bring miseries or evil fruits.

"The man of discrimination is also distracted by Rajas and Tamas, but as he is conscious of their evils he sleeplessly controls his mind and practises concentration of mind. He is not attached to them.

"Being alert and diligent one should secure firmness in the seat and control the breath, and having set the mind on Me, slowly practise concentration.

"This is the Yoga as taught by My disciples Sanaka and others, in order to withdraw the mind successfully from everything and fix it on Me."

Uddhava said, "O Kesava! How, when and in what form did you instruct Yoga to Sanaka and others? Please inform me of the same."

The Lord said: "Sanaka and others, the sons of Brahma born of his mind, requested their father to tell them of the subtle and ultimate goal of Yoga. Sanaka and others said, 'O Lord! The mind is attached to the sense-objects and the sense-objects influence the mind. The objects implant themselves in the mind as tendencies. The mind enters the Gunas (objects) and naturally becomes attached to them and the Gunas, i.e. the objects when experienced enter the mind as desires. How can one who wants to attain the final emancipation produce a separation between the two? How for one who wants to cross over the objects, who seeks to go beyond them and attain Moksha, do they cease to act and react upon each other?"

The Lord said: "The great Lord Brahma, the creator of beings contemplated but could not get to the root of the question as his mind was on work. So he meditated on Me to get an authoritative answer for the same. I appeared before him as a swan. They (Sanaka and others) paid Me due reverence, came forward, bowed at My feet and in the presence of Brahma asked Me the question, "Who art thou?" The answer that I gave to the sages who were anxious to know the truth, I shall now repeat to you, Uddhava.

"O Brahmanas! If your question relates to Atman, then Atman is not many. So the question does not arise. Who will reply to whom? What is the basis on which I can give a full answer to your question? If your question relates to the body, then also the elements of which the body is composed are the same in all beings. Atman also is the same in all. Therefore your question, "Who art Thou?" is meaningless.

"Whatever is perceived by the mind, speech, sight and the

other senses is Myself. There is nothing besides Me. Understand this rightly.

"The objects or the Gunas invade the mind and the mind gets entangled in the objects or Gunas, O sons. The sense-objects (Gunas) and the mind thus mutually blended or intertwined form of this body of the Jiva who is Myself.

[Note: The running of the mind outside through the avenues of the senses and the resultant exprience of the mind by external objects are produced by the Jiva's identifying himself with the body (Upadhi) because of delusion or ignorance. The essence of the Jiva is Brahman or Myself. If the mind which is connected with the objects, is the essence of Jiva, then their separation is not possible. But the essence of Jiva is Brahman. Mind is only attributed to Jiva. The mind is only superimposed on the Jiva. On account of this superimposition of the mind on the Jiva, he is apparently connected with the objects. Jiva's connection with the objects is through the mind. The Self should be withdrawn from both the mind and the objects by meditating on 'I am Brahman.' Turn the mind from the external objects by reflecting on the unreality of the objects and identifying yourself with Brahman. By realising your identity with the Supreme Self you will find out that the objects have no existence. By worshipping the Lord, you can completely rest in your own true essential nature as the Infinite, Satchidananda Brahman.]

"One should identify himself with Me and abandon the mind which is attached to sense-objects by dwelling on them constantly, as well as sense-objects themselves which influence the mind through cravings, Vasanas and desires.

"Wakefulness, dream and sleep, are the three states of the mind caused by the Gunas. The Self is beyond all these states. It is distinct from them, as It is conclusively known and proved to be their witness.

"The bondage caused by the mind imparts the actions of the Gunas to the Jiva. Therefore, being fixed on Me, the fourth

(Turiya) which is beyond the three states, one should get over the bondage of mind. Then it is possible to abandon those Gunas or objects and their thoughts.

"This bondage of Jiva is caused by Ahamkara, egoism or the sense of 'I-ness,' which is the cause of all evils. One should abandon egoism and give up all thoughts of mind and of the connections caused by the mind and identification with the mind, by resting on the Turiya or the transcendent.

"So long as the idea of diversity or manifoldness is not destroyed by reasoning, man is really ignorant, sleeping while he is waking, just as he is wakeful in dreams.

"All things other than Atman are unreal. The differences caused by them such as 'He is a Brahmin,' 'He is a Sudra,' 'He is a householder,' 'He is a Sannyasin,' the different destinations such as Svarga and many acts of Karma which are the causes of various fruits and even Karma itself are all unreal like things seen by one in a dream.

"He who enjoys in the wakeful state through all his senses the objects external and transient, and who in dreams experiences objects similar to them in his mind, who in sleep withdraws himself from them all, is one and the same Atman—the witness of the three states and the Lord of the senses. This is proved from the persistence of memory in all these states. The same memory runs through all these states.

"Reflect well over this, that the three states of the mind are caused in Me by the Gunas through My Maya. Knowing this definitely annihilate egoism which is the source of all doubts by the sword of knowledge, sharpened by reasoning and the precepts of the great sages and the Srutis, and worship Me who dwells in the heart.

"Look upon this universe as a delusion, a play of the mind, now seen and the next moment destroyed, like a dream, and extremely inconsistent like the circle described by a firebrand (Alata Chakra). One consciousness appears as many. The

threefold distinction of waking, dream and deep-sleep which is caused by the transformation of Gunas is Maya.

"Withdraw your senses from this object world. Abandon all desires. Be calm and remain quite immersed in the bliss of your own Self. Be silent and free from action. If ever the universe is experienced, if sometimes this still appears, if at times you will have experience of the object in your daily life for getting the necessities of life, it will not cause delusion in you as you have once thrown them aside as unreal but will linger as a memory only till the fall of the body.

"The perfect man, who has thus gained wisdom and realised his true essential nature, does not see the transient body sitting or standing, whether it moves away from its place or comes back, just as a man who is under intoxication of liquor does not see whether his cloth remains on or slips or falls from his body.

"The body is indeed under the sway of destiny and it waits with the Pranas and the senses till the Karma, the cause of it exhausts itself. But the man who has attained Samadhi in Yoga and realised the Truth does not care for the body and the object-world which are all like dreams. He has no attachment to his body and the sense-objects.

"O Sages! I have explained to you the secret and essential truth of Sankhya or the science which discriminates between the Self and not-Self and Yoga or the science which teaches how to concentrate the mind on the Self and attain Samadhi. Know Me to be Vishnu who has come here to explain Dharma to you and enlighten you on religion and philosophy.

"O excellent Brahmins, I am the supreme goal or the end and the aim of Yoga and Sankhya, of truth, practical and theoretical, of prowess and wealth, of glory, fame, power, splendour and self-control!

"All the eternal virtues (excellent qualities such as equal vision, non-attachment, etc.) abide in Me who is beyond

Prakriti or attributes, who is the Absolute, the friend and the beloved Atman.

"Thus Sanaka and other sages had their doubts cleared by Me, worshipped Me with great devotion and sang My praises.

"Being duly worshipped and praised by those great sages, I came back to My abode before the very eyes of Brahma."

BHAKTI YOGA

Uddhava said: "O Krishna, those versed in the Vedas speak of various means or courses of attaining Moksha. Are all of them equally important or only one is the foremost of them?

"Thou too hast taught the path of devotion to the Lord by which the mind getting rid of attachment to everything merges in Thee."

The Lord said, "These words of Mine known as the Vedas were destroyed by Time at the dissolution of the universe. It was first taught by Me to Brahma and therein is taught the Dharma or the righteous course of devoting the mind to Me. He declared it to his eldest son Manu, from whom Bhrigu and other great Brahma Rishis, seven in number, learnt it.

"From those fathers, their sons, the Gods, Danavas, Guhyakas, men, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas, Charanas, Kimmdevas (half gods), Kinnaras, Nagas, Rakshasas, Kimpurushas and others also learnt it. But the natural tendencies of those are different being the outcome of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

"The tendencies of men are different according to the differences in their nature. So, different paths have been spoken of. It is on account of these natural tendencies that beings and their thoughts differ. According to their nature, different expressions flow from them all. Beings and minds are differentiated according to their temperament, nature and tendencies. According to their natures, the interpretation of the Vedas is various.

"Thus according to difference in nature, the thoughts and

ideas of men differ from generation to generation; while some differ on account of instructions handed down to them through a succession of teachers, and there are also others who go against the Vedas. Because of this difference of nature or intellect, different schools of thought based on the same authority of Vedas arose. Some men became atheists who hold heretic views and have no faith in the Vedas.

"O best of men, people deluded by My Maya describe various things as means to the highest good according to their Karma or occupation and taste.

"As means to the goal some mention duty; others fame, pleasure, truthfulness, control of the senses and control of the mind; yet others mention their own wealth, or the lordly power or gift or food; and some mention sacrifice, austerity, charity, vows, moral rules (Yamas and Niyamas) universal and particular.

"The results attained by these means, being the outcome of work, have a beginning and an end, cause misery and end in Tamas. They give small and transient pleasures and are attended with sorrow.

"Where is that bliss to be found in objects that is to be found in Me? How can one who is attached to sense-objects, enjoy that bliss which a man with his mind given up to Me and free from attachment to all other things, gets from Me?

"To one who craves for nothing, who has nothing to own of the world, who has controlled his senses and mind, who regards all equally, who finds perfect delight in Me alone, all the directions are full of bliss. Fixed in Me, and finding bliss in Me, all is blissful to My devotee.

"He who has surrendered his mind to Me does not seek for the position of Brahma, or that of Indra or an Emperor's throne or Lordship over the nether regions, or the attainment of Yoga powers or even Moksha from which there is no returning; for he desires nothing else but Myself.

"Neither Brahma, nor Siva, nor Balarama, nor Lakshmi, nor My own form is so very dear to Me as thou art to Me.

"I always follow the sage, who desires nothing, is perfectly tranquil, hates none, regards everything equally, in order to purify Myself by the dust of his feet.

"Those great souls whose mind is not touched by desires, who are absolutely free from sin, who are penniless, serene, and compassionate to all creatures, who are devoted to Me do attain to that limitless blissful state which belongs to Me but not to others.

"My ordinary devotee who has yet no control over his senses is generally not overpowered by sense-objects though only troubled by them, on account of his strong devotion. Just as fire growing into a flame burns all fuel into ashes, so the devotion unto Me, O Uddhava, totally burns all sins. O Uddhava, neither Yoga, nor knowledge, nor Dharma, nor study of the Vedas, nor austerity nor renunciation propitiates Me or wins Me, so much as the well developed and unswerving devotion to Me does. I, the beloved Atman of the righteous, am attained only by undivided devotion and faith. Devotion to Me purifies even outcastes and removes their congenital impurity and saves them from births.

"Virtue united with truthfulness and compassion or learning with austerity does not entirely purify one who is destitute of devotion to Me.

"How can the mind be purified without devotion to Me which is characterised by melting of the heart, the hair standing on end and tears of joy trickling down the cheeks?

"A devotee of Mine whose speech is broken by sobs, whose heart melts, who without shyness sometimes weeps profusely, or laughs or sings loudly and dances, not only purifies himself but purifies the whole world.

"Just as gold blown in the fire loses its impurities and regains its own real form, so also the mind shakes off its impurities and its tendencies of Karma and desire for work by

means of devotion to Me, regains its own true form and attains to Me.

"The More the mind is purified by listening to my sacred stories and the repetition of My Names, the more it sees the subtle essence of things and the subtle Reality, just as the eye touched with collyrium or unguent does through its enhanced power of sight.

"Think of objects and your mind will be attached to objects. Think of Me and your mind will be merged in Me alone. Therefore fix your mind on Me, purified by devotion, abandoning all other thoughts of unreal objects which are like the dreams or fancies.

"Shun from a distance the company of women and of those who keep the company of women. Be self-controlled. Go to a solitary place which is congenial and then sleeplessly meditate on Me without break. Be on the alert. Be vigilant. Shake off lethargy and laziness. There is not so much misery, so much bondage from other quarters as from the company of women and of those who associate with them."

METHOD OF MEDITATION

Uddhava said: "O Lord of lotus eyes! Please tell me how and in what aspect personal or impersonal, concrete or abstract, an aspirant after Moksha should meditate on Thee? Tell me what is the nature of that meditation, what it is, in what manner, and in what form?"

The Lord said: "Sitting on an even seat with his body erect in a comfortable posture, placing the two hands on his lap and fixing the eyes on the tip of his nose, one should cleanse the passage of Prana by means of inhalation (Puraka), retention (Kumbhaka) and exhalation (Rechaka) of the breath and should also practise slowly in the inverse order, keeping the senses under control.

"OM, with the sound of a bell, extends all over from Muladhara upwards. He should by Pranayama push upwards the sacred syllable OM which is uninterrupted like a lotus fibre,

through the heart and make it ring like a bell and again add to it the vowel.

"Thus one should practise the Pranayama accompanied by OM ten times, thrice daily. He should mentally repeat OM continuously during inhalation and exhalation. Within a month one shall be able to control the Prana. Within the body there is the lotus of the heart with its stalk above and the flower downwards, facing below, with eight petals and pericap. It is also closed. Meditate on it as facing upwards and full blown. On the pericap think of the sun, the moon and the fire one within the other. Meditate on the following form of Mine within the fire which is good and very auspicious for meditation;

"My form—symmetrical, gracious, gentle, with four long and beautiful arms, well-developed and beautiful neck, beautiful cheeks and a graceful smile.

"With Makara Kundalas or shining pendants adorning symmetrical ears, clad in a cloth of gold, dark complexioned like a cloud, with the splendid Srivatsa mark and Lakshmi on the chest;

"Adorned with conch, disc, mace, lotus and a garland of wild-flowers (Vanamala), with feet adorned with ringing anklets and the chest resplendent with the effulgence of the Kaustubha gem;

"Decked with a brilliant crown, bracelets and a waist-band beautiful in every feature, captivating to the heart, with the face and eyes beaming with graciousness and very tender, one should meditate on this form of the above description keeping the mind steady. He should concentrate the mind on all the features. He should withdraw the senses from their objects with a strong mind, and with the help of the charioteer intellect as guide, he should direct the mind to My whole body. Then he should concentrate on one part only, My smiling face. He should not meditate on anything else. Then withdraw the mind from the face and fix it on Akasa or the supreme cause. Give up that also. Rest on Me as the pure Brahman devoid of all

atttributes. Think of nothing at all. Let the Triputi, viz. Meditator, object of meditation and meditation vanish. Let them become one. Forget the triple differences. This is the highest Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

"He who has thus attained perfect absorption, who has completely merged his mind sees himself in Me and also sees Me in himself like light united to light. The delusion about objects, finite knowledge and action shall then completely disappear for the Yogin, who thus concentrates his mind through intense meditation and attains oneness with Me or Samadhi. This is the fruit of Samadhi."

THE SIDDHIS

The Lord said: "The Yogi who has controlled his senses and Pranas, who is balanced, and who concentrates the mind on Me, attains various powers or Siddhis."

Uddhava said: "Tell me, O Krishna, what kind of power comes by any particular kind of concentration and how? How many are these powers? It is Thou who conferest powers on the Yogins."

The Lord said: "Eighteen are the powers declared by those who are experts or adepts in Yoga. Eight of these belong to Me. They are higher powers. They are normally the powers of Isvara. They exist in a somewhat lesser degree in those who approach the state of Isvara. The remaining ten are due to highly developed Sattva Guna.

"*Anima,* the power of becoming as small as an atom, *mahima* the power to assume the biggest size, *garima,* the power of becoming very heavy, *laghima* the power of becoming very light—these are the powers belonging to the body.

"*Prapti*, the power to act with the senses of all beings in association with their presiding deities; *prakamya,* power of enjoying all objects seen or unseen (heard through the scriptures).

"*Isatva,* rulership or Lordship (exercising an influence

over all as Lord: *vasitva,* non-attachment to objects (power of self-control); to be free from the desire for sensuous enjoyments, *kamavasayitva;* the power of attaining all desires—These are my eight natural, essential and infinite Siddhis. They normally exist in Me.

"Cessation of hunger and thirst, hearing from a distance (Doorasravana), seeing from a distance (Dooradarshana), swiftness or motion of the body like that of wind (Manojava); assuming any form at will (Kamarupam); entering into another's body (Parakaya pravesham); joining in the recreation of the gods (Devanam saha kreedanudarshanam); death at one's own will (Svachhanda mrityu); the attainment of desire for objects (Yathasankalpa Samsiddhi); to command unopposed everywhere—these are the ten Siddhis that relate to the Gunas.

"Knowledge of the past, present and future (Trikalajnana) control over the pairs of opposites such as heat and cold, reading other's mind, counteracting the influence of fire, sun, water, poison and the like; invincibility or not being overcome by anybody (Parajaya)—these are five smaller Siddhis.

"These are the powers that are obtained through Yogic concentration. Now know from Me what powers can be attained by a particular course of concentration and in what manner they can be attained.

"He who concentrates on Me present in the subtle Bhutas, regarding Me to be of the subtle form, he who thus contemplates Me in the subtle form of that principle, he who fixes his mind on Me as pervading the Tanmatras, he who concentrates on Me as the five primordial atoms acquire the power of Anima or the power of becoming an atom.

"He who concentrates his mind on Me as pervading Mahat Tattva acquires Mahima or the power of becoming vast or big, or the power of increasing in size. He who concentrates on Me as possessed of the adjunct or Upadhi of ether and the other elements attains the power of Mahima, the respective vastness of those elements.

"He who concentrates on Me regarding Me as the subtle cause of the primordial atoms and as the Lord pervading the atoms, attains the power of Laghima or the power of becoming very, very light. He can ascend the sun along its rays.

"He who concentrates his mind on Me regarding Me as the Lord pervading the Sattvic Ahamkara and as the Inner Ruler of all the senses, attains the power of Prapti. He becomes the presiding Deity of each of the organs. He can direct them any way he wishes. He can touch the moon with his finger.

"He who concentrates the mind on Me as possessing the adjunct of Mahat Tattva or cosmic mind which is born of Avyakta or the unmanifested, he who worships himself as the portion of Mahat Tattva and always merges his mind in such Tattva, he who keeps the mind fixed on Me present in the Sutra or Mahat Tattva, attains the power of Prakamya, the power of enjoying all objects seen or heard. He obtains Prakasyam or omniscience.

"He who concentrates his mind on Vishnu, the Ruler of Maya or the three Gunas as the Antaryamin of Time, whose form is Time, attains the power of Isatva or all-ruling power. He gets the power to control the Jivas, their bodies and minds.

"He who concentrates his mind on Narayana, the transcendental or Turiya, called also Bhagavan, attains the power of Vasitva or self-control.

"He who concentrates his mind on Me, the pure Brahman beyond the Gunas, attains the highest bliss while all desires end.

"He who concentrates his mind on Me as the pure embodiment of virtue and the Lord of Svetadvipa, becomes pure and free from the six waves (Shadurmis) or changes, viz. hunger, thirst, grief, delusion, decay and death that affect the body.

"He who concentrates on Akasa and merges his mind in the same can hear distant sounds. He who unites the eye with the sun and the sun with the eye and contemplates Me there with

his concentrated mind can see even distant objects. He develops the subtle power of vision to see the whole universe.

"By merging the mind on Me and making the body one with Vayu, the Yogi can take the body swiftly wherever the mind goes. By making the mind as the material cause, the Yogi assumes any form he likes by concentrating on Me. When the Yogi wishes to enter into another's body, he should contemplate himself as present in that body. Then the Prana leaves his body and enters into it by passing through the external air like a bee.

"He who controls the breath and is able to gradually take it along the six Chakras of the body up to the head or Brahmarandhra has the power to live as long as he likes and cast off his body at will. Sitting on the heel and lifting the Prana to the heart, chest, throat and crown of head and taking it to Brahman through the opening in the head, Brahmarandhra, the Yogi should cast off the body.

"If one wishes to sport in the celestial gardens, he should think of the Sattva in Me. Then the celestial damsels born of Sattva will wait on him with aerial cars.

"In whatever form at any time the Yogin may reflect on a particular object concentrating the mind on Me who am of true and infallible will, he gets that very form.

"He who has attained to My state, the supreme and Absolute Ruler through concentration attains My powers and can control others like Myself. He never finds his command disobeyed anywhere, like Mine.

"The Yogin whose mind is purified by devotion to Me and who is thoroughly versed in concentration on God attains the power to see the past, present and future and the hour of birth and death of his own and other lives.

"The Yogic body of the Yogi whose mind has found rest by union with Me is not destroyed by fire and the like, just as aquatic animals are not affected by water.

"He who meditates on My forms adorned with Srivatsa,

weapons, ornaments, banner, umbrella and chowry never suffers a defeat.

"To the Yogi who worships Me with the concentration in the aforesaid manner, the above mentioned powers come in their entirety.

"All powers are attainable by the Yogi who has controlled his mind, senses, breath and body and who concentrates on Me with faith and devotion.

"But in the case of one who practises the best course of Yoga of devotion to Me, obtains My grace and attains union with Me, these powers are mere obstacles and things that cause waste of time. These Yogic powers are considered obstacles, for by indulging in them and perhaps inadvertently abusing such powers, the devotee may get retarded in the progress towards Me. He may forget himself and lose his hard earned penance by devotion in Me, by indulgence in such Yogic powers.

"Through concentration on Me, My devotee naturally attains all those powers that are said to result from birth, or drugs or Tapas or Mantras; therefore one ought not resort to the course of Yoga in other ways.

"I am the cause of these Yogic powers. I am the Lord or powerful Master of the powers. I am also the Lord of Yoga, of knowledge, of Dharma expounded by those versed in the Vedas and of the teachers of Brahman.

"I am the Atman of all beings. I am their indwelling soul. I am within and without them, not enclosed by anything, just as the five Bhutas are within and without the creatures and also exist separately."

THE VIBHUTIS OR POWERS OF THE LORD

Uddhava said: "Thou art the Supreme Brahman without beginning or end, uncovered by anything. Thou art the cause of the protection, maintenance, death and birth of all beings.

"O Lord! the Brahmins who know the true sense of the Vedas worship Thee in Thy true form, and as the Truth in all

beings great and small, high and low; but Thou art unknown to those who have not controlled their mind or have no training.

"Tell me of the several points in respect of which the great Rishis or sages worship Thee in devotion in the several beings and hereby attain to perfection.

"O Creator of all beings; O Antaryamin or Inner Ruler; Thou actest and dwellest in them concealed from their view. Deluded by Thee they do not see Thee, but Thou seest all.

"O Lord of boundless glories! Pray tell me of those glorious forms which are manifested by Thyself severally on the earth, in the heavens, in the nether world and in all quarters. I bow to Thy lotus feet which are the source of all holy waters, which are the source of all purity and in which are centred all sacred places."

The Lord said: "O best of those who can make enquiries and are able in putting questions. This very question was put to Me by Arjuna, who was about to fight with the enemies on the field of Kurukshetra.

"Believing that the slaying of his relatives for the sake of kingdom was reproachful and unrighteous and thinking, 'I am the slayer, he is slain by me,' Arjuna with the sense of an ordinary man desisted from fighting.

"Then, on the eve of battle, he was made to understand by Me through reasoning, and he then spoke to Me in the same way on the battlefield as thou hast now done.

"O Uddhava! I am the Atman, friend and the Supreme Ruler of all beings. I am Myself all the beings. I create, protect and destroy them.

"I am the motion of those that move and I am Time of those who bring things under their influence. Of virtues I am even-mindedness, and in things possessing properties, I am their essential and natural attribute.

"Among those that are endowed with Gunas I am the cosmic Prana, and I am the cosmic Intelligence (Maha Tattva)

among all vast or big things. I am the subtle Jiva or soul among all subtle things, and of all that are invincible I am the mind.

"Of the Vedas I am Brahma or Hiranyagarbha, the teacher who first taught them; of Mantras I am OM or Pranava consisting of A, U, and M. Of all the letters I am 'A' and of all the metres I am the Gayatri.

"I am Indra among the Gods, Agni among the Vasus, Vishnu among the Adityas and Nilalohita among the Rudras. Among Maharshis (Brahmin sages) I am Bhrigu; among Rajarshis (royal sages) Manu; among Deva Rishis (celestial sages) I am Narada and among cows Kamadhenu.

"Among the great Siddhas I am Kapila, among birds I am Garuda; among all progenitors I am Daksha; among Pitris I am Aryaman.

"Know Me, O Uddhava, to be Prahlada, the king of the Asuras, among Daityas; to be moon (Soma) among stars and plants; to be Kubera among Yakshas and Rakshasas.

"I am Airavata among the great elephants; among the aquatic creatures I am Varuna their Lord; I am the sun among objects that give heat and light; and I am the king among men.

"I am Ucchaisravas (Indra's horse) among horses and gold among metals, Yama among those who control and Vasuki (their king) among serpents.

"I am Ananta (their king) among the Nagas; I am the lion among all beasts; I am the fourth Ashrama (Sannyasa) among the four periods of life and I am the first or Brahmin among castes, O sinless One.

"I am the Ganga among the rivers, the ocean among the reservoirs of water. I am the bow among weapons, and Siva—the destroyer of the three cities—among those who wield the bows.

"I am Mount Meru among abodes and the Himalayas among inaccessible places. I am the Asvattha (*pipal* tree)

among trees; I am Yava (barley) among all the plants that yield food.

"I am Vasishtha among priests and Brihaspati among preceptors or knowers of Brahman. I am Skanda among generals and Brahma among the righteous or those who put people in the righteous path.

"I am Brahma-Yajna or the study of the Vedas among sacrifices; of all the vows I am the vow of harmlessness or non-injury; of purifying agencies I am the wind, fire, sun, water, speech and Atman; of all things that are pure I am the purity.

"I am the perfect control of mind (Samadhi) among the Yogis; I am the counsel or policy of those who seek to conquer; I am the justice in all laws or ordinances; I am discrimination—between Atman and Anatman—among the discerning faculties; and I am the doubt of those who enter into the debate in the theory of perception.

"I am Satarupa (wife of Manu) among women and of men I am Svayambhuva Manu, the son of Brahma. I am Narayana among sages or saints and Sanatkumara among celibates or Brahmacharis.

"I am renunciation (Sannyasa) among virtues and I am the promise of protection against fear of all virtuous duties; of all causes of security I am contemplation or introspection. Of secrets I am sweet words and silence; and of the pairs I am the Prajapati (Brahma) who out of his body created the first pair Manu and Satarupa.

"Of those that are regular I am Samvatsara (the year); of the seasons I am the Vasanta (spring); of months I am Margaseersha (latter half of December and first half of January) and of stars I am the Abhijit.

"I am the Kritayuga or Satya Yuga among Yugas and of the wise, brave and the steady-minded I am Devala and Asita; of the dividers of the Vedas I am Dvaipayana and of men of wisdom I am Sukra, possessed of self-control.

"I am Vasudeva among the Lords or Avataras and of the

devotees I am thyself. I am Hanuman among the Kimpurushas; and of Vidyadharas I am Sudarsana; (I am Chakra or Sudarshana among weapons).

"I am the sapphire (blue stone or ruby) among precious stones; of the beautiful I am the lotus-bud; I am the sacred Kusa among the many varieties of grass; and of oblations I am the clarified butter or cow's ghee.

"I am the fortune of the persevering and the fraud of the deceitful; I am forbearance or fortitude of the plodding or the painstaking, and I am the Sattva (purity or goodness) of those who have Sattva.

"Know that I am firmness and resistance in the strong and devotion among the devotees; of the nine forms worshipped by devotees, I am the first and the most important manifestation, Vasudeva.

"I am Visvavasu among Gandharvas and Purvachiti (Urvasi) among Apsaras. I am the firmness of mountains and am the smell in abstract of earth.

"I am the sweet taste in water, and the sun among the resplendent; I am the brilliance in the sun, moon and stars and the sound in ether.

"I am Bali among the worshippers of Brahmanas and I am Arjuna among warriors. I am indeed the origin, sustenance and dissolution of all beings.

"I am the motion, speech, excretion, taking, enjoyment, touch, sight, taste, hearing and smelling of the organs. I constitute their functions. I am indeed the sense of all the senses.

"Earth, air, ether, water, light, egoism, intelligence, the sixteen modifications of Prakriti, viz. the five Tanmatras, the ten organs and mind, Purusha and Prakriti; Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and the Supreme Brahman—all these I am. I am also their enumeration, their knowledge and realisation of Truth.

"Nothing exists without My presence in My twofold

aspect, of the Lord and the Jiva, attribute and substance, the indwelling soul and gross or subtle body just as a thing cannot be without its property.

"I can count the atoms of the elements in course of time but My powers and glories displayed in creating crores of worlds are indeed beyond counting , i.e. infinite.

"Wherever there are majesty, fortune, prosperity, power, beauty, fame, wealth, modesty, liberality, sacrifice, prowess, forbearance, fortitude, subtle understanding and knowledge—there I am manifested.

"I have thus described to you shortly all these manifestations of Mine. They are only modifications of the mind and are somehow expressed through speech. They are only a part of Myself. My real nature is beyond the description of words or the grasp of the mind.

"Control the speech, control the mind, control the breath and the senses, control also the impure mind by the pure mind, control the self by the Self. Then you will no more return to the world.

"For the man who has not perfectly controlled his speech and mind, his vows, austerities and gifts leak out as water does from an unburnt pot.

"Therefore with devotion to Me one should control speech, mind, and the Pranas. He should fix his mind in Me with firm devotion. Then he will attain the final goal easily."

THE DUTIES OF THE BRAHMACHARIN AND THE HOUSEHOLDER

Uddhava said: "Thou hast already described the Dharma or the righteous course called Bhakti or devotion as beneficial to all human beings who observe the rules laid down for the different castes or orders of life. O Lord of lotus-like eyes! Please tell me in detail of the Dharma peculiar to each by practising which a man may develop devotion to Thee.

"O Mighty-armed Lord! O Madhava, the knowledge of the

Eternal Truth, Brahman, the righteous course of the highest character that Thou expound to Brahma in the form of a swan, is not perhaps remembered in the mortal world, O Slayer of foes, as it was taught long ago.

"O Achyuta! Other than Thyself there is none to teach, to practise and maintain Dharma on earth, and even in the court of Brahma where the sciences and all the deities presiding over the disciplines are personally present.

"O Madhusudana! When Thou, the originator, defender and expounder of it, leavest the earth, religion and Dharma too will die. Who, O Lord, will then expound the lost Dharma?

"Thou knowest all the Dharmas. Pray explain to me, O Lord, the Dharma that leads to Thy devotion, how and for whom it is laid down?"

The Lord said: "O Uddhava, your question is righteous, for it will have the way to Moksha for men who observe the duties of caste and order of life. Listen to my exposition of the same.

"In the beginning, in the Krita or Satya Yuga, men had but one caste which was known as Hamsa. Men attained the consummation of their desires from their very birth. They had by nature all their objects accomplished. They were in full touch with Me and knew that the object of their lives was to worship Me. Hence it was called the Krita Yuga (the time that makes everything ready for men, achieved).

"In that primeval age, the sacred syllable OM was the Veda and I was Dharma in the form of a bull having four feet. Men of that age were pure and firm in Tapas. They meditated on Me, the pure one.

"In the beginning of Treta, O blessed one! The Vedas became revealed from My heart through the Prana, out of which I became the sacrifice with its three main characteristics, viz. the Hota, Adhvaryu, and Udgata who perform the different functions of a Vedic sacrifice.

"The four castes Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra with their separate duties and callings were created from the

face, hands, thighs and legs of the Virat Purusha respectively. The householder's life had its origin from My thighs, the student life from My heart, the life of a Vanaprastha in the forest from My chest and the life of Sannyasa from My head.

"The natural characteristics or tendencies of the different castes and orders of life among men were according to the place of their origin; those born of the lower members had inferior tendencies and those born of the higher had superior characteristics or tendencies. Control of the mind and the senses, meditation, cleanliness, contentment, patience, forbearance, straightforwardness, devotion to Me, compassion and truthfulness—these are the characteristics of the Brahmana.

"Majesty, strength, fortitude, heroism, endurance, liberality, exertion, firmness, devotion to the Brahmana and ruling power, honesty, these are the characteristics of a Kshatriya. Faith, a strong disposition to give, absence of hypocrisy, service to the Brahmins, to be ever on the look out for amassing wealth—these are the characteristics of the Vaisya.

"Service to the twice-born, to the cows, to the gods, to be contended with what he gets therefrom—these are the characteristics of the Sudra.

"Uncleanliness, falsehood, theft, lack of faith, atheism, quarrelsomeness without cause, lust, anger, greed—these are the characteristics of a fifth class who are beyond the pale of the four castes.

"Harmlessness, truthfulness, freedom from theft, lust, anger, covetousness and an effort to do what is agreeable and beneficial to all beings—this is the course of Dharma or common duty of all castes.

"Having had the regular course of purificatory rites and the second birth of initiation known as the sacred thread ceremony, a Dvija or twice-born should dwell in the house of his preceptor with control over his senses, and study the Vedas when called upon to do so by him.

"He should wear a girdle or waist-band made of sacred grass, deerskin as upper garment, rosary of Rudraksha beads and the holy thread and carry a staff, water pot and some Kusa grass. He should wear matted hair, must not waste his time in beautifying his face and body and avoid coloured seats.

"He should observe silence while bathing, eating, offering oblations to the fire, repeating His Mantra and answering calls of nature. He should not cut his hair in the arm-pits and private parts.

"He should observe strict Brahmacharya and never make any conscious break. If he becomes unconsciously impure, he should have a bath and repeat the Gayatri, controlling the breath or practising Pranayama.

"After attending to cleanliness in the morning and evening, he should silently repeat his Mantra with concentration and offer his worship to the fire, the Sun, the preceptor, cows, Brahmins, superiors, elderly people and the gods.

"He should regard the preceptor as Myself and never disregard or look down upon him as a man. He should not find our defects in the preceptor taking him to be a man, for the preceptor represents all the gods and he is the abode of all the gods.

"In the morning and evening he should bring his alms or whatever else he may have received, to his preceptor and eat with moderation whatever is permitted by the preceptor.

"He should always worship the preceptor serving him as a servant, by following him when he is going somewhere, resting near him when he is asleep, sitting by his side to shampoo his limbs when he is tired and being near him with folded palms ready to carry out his commands.

"Conducting himself thus he should live in the house of his preceptor shunning comforts and maintaining perfect celibacy till the course of learning is finished.

[Note: There are two types of Brahmacharins—the

Upakurvana and the Naishthika. The former enters the household life after the completion of his study. He generally gives presents to his preceptor, returns to his house and enters the Grihasthasrama. The Naishthika maintains life-long celibacy. The above is the description of the duties of the former. Now the duties of a Naishthika Brahmachari are described.]

"If he wishes to attain the Brahmaloka, he should observe rigid celibacy and surrender his body to his preceptor as a tribute for the instructions he received from him.

"Being sinless and possessed of the lustre of Brahman, he should worship Me, the Supreme Being, in the fire, the preceptor, his own Self, and in all beings with a feeling of identity or oneness.

"He who is not a householder should avoid seeing, touching, conversing or joking, etc. with women and also seeing other animals in sexual intercourse.

"Cleanliness, the sipping of water preparatory to religious functions (Achamana), bathing, offering prayers in the morning, noon and evening, straightforwardness, visiting of holy places, repetition of the Mantra, avoidance of things not to be touched or eaten, and of persons not to be talked to, devotion to Me present in all beings, and control of mind, speech and body—these, O Uddhava, are the observances or rules of discipline (Niyamas) which are common for all the orders of life.

"Thus, the Brahmin who practises rigid celibacy shines like fire, and if he is unselfish, his desires are burnt by intense austerities and he attains devotion to Me.

"Then, if he desires to enter the life of a householder after having properly studied the Vedas, he should offer his Dakshina (presents) to his preceptor and with his permission perform the usual ablution or bath, i.e. perform the rite of concluding the student-life or Brahmacharya Ashram.

"Next, he may enter the life of a householder, the hermit's

life in the forest, or the life of a Sannyasi. He may pass from one Ashram to another with his mind intent on Me. He should not give up the Ashrams altogether.

"If he wishes to lead the life of a householder, he should marry an unblemished girl of the same caste free from defects of birth, habits and qualities, who must be younger in age, and if he desires to marry any other he should do so after the above marriage in the due or succeeding order, i.e. a Brahmin could marry in the three other castes; a Kshatriya in the two lower; Vaishya in the Sudra caste; the Sudra in his own caste. It should not be done in the inverse order.

"To perform sacrifices, to study the Vedas, and to distribute charitable gifts are duties common to all the twice-born. To accept gifts, to teach the Vedas, and to help others to perform sacrifices are duties of the Brahmins only.

"If a Brahmin thinks that the acceptance of gifts would deprive him of his Tapas, spiritual power and glory, he should try to live by the other two means, viz. teaching and helping others to perform sacrifices (i.e. acting as a priest); if he considers them harmful he should make his living by gleaning the grains of corn that lie scattered in the fields as useless.

"The body of a Brahmin is indeed not intended for enjoying trifling objects of desire. It is for rigorous Tapas here and infinite bliss hereafter.

"A Brahmin who is contented with what he gets by gleaning grains left in the fields and follows the purest and highest course of Dharma and discharges his duties consisting of hospitality, etc. devoting his mind to Me without attachment to other things, surely attains Peace or Moksha, though continuing in the householder's life.

"Just as a boat saves a drowning man from the sea so also I soon protect from calamities those who lift up a Brahmana (devotee) devoted to Me from his difficulty or misfortune.

"The king full of wisdom and courage should rescue his subjects from calamities like a father. Just as the leader of

elephants saves other elephants in his herd, so also he should rescue himself by his own efforts with firmness.

"A king who does his duty in this manner shakes of all his sins on earth, goes to heaven in a celestial car resplendent like the sun, and enjoys in the company of Indra, the king of the gods.

"In adversity a Brahmin may try to get over it by taking to the Vaishya's trade, by selling only the permitted articles. If he is still overtaken by misfortune, he may live by the sword, but never resort to dog-like servility by serving the low.

"In adversity a king or a Kshatriya may live by the Vaishya's pursuits (agriculture) or by hunting, or by going out like a Brahmin but never by serving the low.

"A Vaishya in adversity may lead the life of a Sudra. A Sudra may adopt the pursuit of making mats and the like. But when he is out of difficulty he should not wish to maintain himself by a despicable profession.

"A householder should according to his means daily worship the Rishis, the Pitris, the gods, the lower animals and men considering them as forms of Mine, with the study of the Vedas, Svadha and Svaha offerings, food and the like respectively. This is the Pancha Maha Yajna. Every householder should perform this daily.

"With the wealth that is obtained by chance or is acquired by honest means, he should perform the above sacrifices only in the just course without putting his servants to trouble and without taxing his dependents. He should maintain himself and his dependents and perform sacrifices. He should not starve his family in order to perform his sacrifices.

"He should have no attachment to his family. He should not forget God even though he is a householder. The wise man should regard the unseen enjoyments of heaven and the like as transient and perishable as those of this visible world.

"The association with sons, wife, relatives and friends is like the chance meeting of travellers or co-passengers in a

journey. They depart with the fall of each body as dreams following sleep do. Just as a person casts off the objects of his dream when he rises from sleep, so also he should be prepared to shake his mind off them at any time.

"One who reflecting thus lives at home without attachment and egoism like a guest, is not bound by the home, and is free.

"Having with devotion worshipped Me alone by means of all the religious duties laid down for the householder, he may lead the life of a householder or enter the forest or if he has progeny may become a Sannyasin.

"But he who is strongly attached to his house, who is anxious about his children and wealth, who is full of passion for women is a foolish man. He is deluded and bound by the notions of 'I' and 'mine'.

" 'Alas, my aged parents, my wife and young children are without protector except myself. How could they who are helpless and afflicted live without me?' Thus this foolish man constantly thinks of them, with his heart distracted by thoughts of home. Then he dies and falls into blinding darkness, i.e. he takes a low birth.' "

THE DUTIES OF VANAPRASTHIS AND SANNYASINS

The Lord said: "He who desires to retire into the forest, should entrust his wife to the care of his son or enter the forest with her and live peacefully in the forest in tranquil meditation spending the third part of his life from 51 to 75.

"He should live on roots, fruits and other forest articles of diet and clothe himself with barks, grass or leaves or a deer-skin. He should allow his hair, nails and beard to grow, should bathe thrice a day and lie on the bare ground. [He should not give much attention to the body. He should not think much of body. Then he will have much time to think of Atman].

"In summer, he should do penance in the midst of five fires , i.e. four fires all round and the sun above, without seeking any

shade. In the rainy season he should do penance immersed in water upto the neck. Thus he should practise austerity.

"He should eat food cooked over a fire, or what ripens naturally in the course of time or what is pounded in the mortar or the stone or in the mortar of his own teeth.

"He should himself collect from within the forest itself all his means of living having a true insight into the place, time and strength. He should not eat things procured and stored up at some past time.

"The hermit should offer oblations fixed for the particular occasions, with grains that grow in the forest and not with animal sacrifice mentioned in the Sruti.

"Agnihotra, Darsa (observances during the new moon), Purnamasya (observances during the full moon), as well as Chaturmasya sacrifices are prescribed equally for the Vanaprastha by the Vedic teachers.

"With his body reduced to a skeleton by the Tapas so performed, the hermit or forest recluse worships and propitiates Me and attains to Me through Maharloka and other stages.

"Who is a greater fool than he who will waste for the fulfilment of petty desires such as enjoyment in heaven, etc. such great Tapas performed with considerable difficulty and calculated to confer liberation or Moksha?

"When the hermit is unable to observe his duties on account of shaking of the limbs consequent on old age, he should withdraw his sacred fires into himself, and with his mind intent on Me, enter into the fire.

"When he is totally disgusted with the enjoyments of the worlds resulting from Karma, realising that they are attended with miseries, pains and sorrows and are not eternal, he should abandon the fires and become a Sannyasin.

"Having worshipped Me according to precepts and sacrificed unto Me as ordained by the Vedas and given everything to the priests, he should withdraw the fire into

himself and become a Sannyasin without longing and caring for anything.

"To the Brahmin who tries to become a Sannyasin, the gods will, in the form of his wife and other relations, put obstacles, thinking that he may transcend and attain to Brahman.

"If the Sannyasi keeps a second piece of cloth it should be only as much as covers the loin-cloth. Except in times of danger he should not have anything that he has already relinquished at the time of taking order other than his staff and his begging bowl.

"He should place his foot on the ground after looking well. Before every step that he takes with his feet he should examine the path with his eyes to see no life is destroyed by such step. He should drink water filtered through a cloth, should utter words which are truthful and do that which his reason sanctions as pure or right.

"Silence (Mouna), abandoning of selfish works or inaction, and control of the breath or Prana are the restraints of speech, body and mind respectively. One who has not these, never becomes a Sannyasi by simply carrying a bamboo staff. A Sannyasi avoiding those who are reproachful should get his alms from the four castes by going to not more than seven houses which are not already appointed. He should be contented with what he gets. He should not think of the food beforehand. He should not entertain the ideas 'I will get this food from this house and another kind of food from that house and the like.' He must not obtain more food than what is actually sufficient for one meal.

"He should take such alms to the river, tank or lake outside the village. He should take a bath and purify his food by sprinkling with water and offer portions to the deities and all creatures and silently all that remains without saying anything.

"He should wander on this earth alone without attachment to anybody, with mind and senses under control. His sport and

enjoyment should be in his Self only. He should find recreation and delight in his Self only. He should find recreation and delight in his own Atman only. He should see all objects alike. He should have equal vision and see Brahman to be one and the same everywhere.

"The sage should resort to a lonely, secured and congenial spot and should contemplate on Brahman as identical with Me, with his mind purified by intense devotion to Me.

"He should reflect on the nature of his bondage and release through the light of knowledge. Bondage consists in the distraction of the senses and release consists in becoming free from their control. His contemplation will convince him that the knowledge of his unity with Brahman is emancipation and that absence of the same, (identity with the body) creates egoism and Karma or bondage. He realises that actions with desire for gratification of the senses creates bondage and that restraint of the senses leads to salvation.

"Therefore the sage should control the senses and the six enemies (Shadvarga or shad urmis), viz. hunger, thirst, sorrow, delusion, decay and death by the force of devotion to Me and roam about looking upon everything as Myself. Deriving great bliss and peace from the Self within, he should continue the course of meditation having renounced petty desires.

"He may for the sake of alms just enter cities, villages, hamlets and assemblies of pilgrims. He should roam over the land abounding in holy places, rivers, mountains, forests and hermitages.

"He should get his alms mostly from the hermitages of Vanaprasthis who have retired into the forest, for his mind is purified by taking the food consisting of grains gleaned from the fields and he soon frees himself from delusion and attains bliss or liberation.

"He should never regard this world as real because it undergoes change and perishes. He should not regard sweet food and other things as real for the objects of gross vision do

perish. Therefore, with a mind free from attachment to this world and the next, he should give up all activities that tend to enjoyments in them.

"Having realised by force of reason that this universe, the body, the mind, speech and Pranas are all Maya or a delusive superimposition on Atman, the Self-centred sage should take a firm hold of his own Atman and renounce the former up. He should not again think of them.

"Now the duties of the Paramahamsas are described. He who is full of wisdom and renunciation, who is devoted to Me without caring even for salvation should move about without any outward marks of Sannyasa and should be above all formalities.

"Though he is wise, he should play like a child; though he is skilled in everything, he should behave like a simpleton; though he is a man of erudition, he should talk like an ordinary man; and though he is well versed in the Vedas, he should behave like an ordinary man, without thirsting for applause or name and fame.

"He should not take delight in explaining or upholding the Vedas relating to sacrificial duties; he should not be an unbeliever in the Vedas. He should not indulge in vain discussions or empty debates. He should not take part or side in worthless discussions.

"The sage should not be afraid of other men; nor should he frighten them. He should not be vexed by others nor should he vex others. He should put up with harsh words. He should never insult anybody; for the sake of the body he should not like a brute, be at enmity with any.

"The one Supreme Atman abides in the bodies of all beings and in one's own body, just as the same moon gets reflected in different vessels or expanses of water. All bodies are of the same nature also, as they are made up of the same five elements.

"Possessed of fortitude, he should not grow despondent, if

he does not get food at any time or anywhere nor rejoice if he is likely to get much; for both these are in the hands of Providence (My hands) and they are controlled by destiny.

"He should try to get his food. He should not leave this also to destiny, because it is proper to support life. By supporting life he is able to investigate into the Truth and by knowing it he gets emancipation.

"He should eat the food rich or poor, good or bad which by chance he gets; so also, he may accept clothes or a bed as chance may bring him. [A Paramahamsa, need not avoid comforts if they come by chance. Attachment to Vairagya is as much an evil as attachment to Raga itself. A Paramahamsa should be above Raga and Vairagya. This is the real test. Some are attached to Vairagya till the end of life. Vairagya only is their goal. Such people have not attained the real state of equanimity of a Jivanmukta. A Paramahamsa should keep the same state of mind when he gets comforts or when he is under privation. Attachment to Vairagya alone is one-sided development. It is imperfection. Some Sannyasins who have no Vairagya, who do not practise Vairagya, whose minds are full of Vasanas say, 'We have got mental non-attachment. We need not practise any Vairagya. We are above the pairs of opposites. We are Advaitins who have got Jnana Nishta.' These are deluded souls.]

"The sage may, as I, the Supreme Ruler, sportfully do observe cleanliness, wash his mouth and bathe and go through all other observances, not with a sense of compulsion under rules.

"He has no idea or perception of differences, because it has been dispelled by his realisation of Me. Till the fall of his body he may sometimes have a trace or a semblance of it and after that he attains a state of equality with Me. To the sage who has realised his unity with Me, the world will not appear real though he may mix in the world. [Though he may at times forget his blissful nature on account of the body and get deluded, he will soon regain knowledge by My grace and cast aside such temporary delusion. This will occur only in the case of those

who have attained glimpses of Brahman. Those who are established in Bhuma, who have attained the full realisation will not be subject to any kind of delusion or difference.]

"He who has become disgusted with the works and the objects of desire which necessarily land him in miseries, who has controlled the mind but has not yet made enquiries about the religion that lead to Me, should betake himself to a sage and make him as his preceptor.

"Till he realises Brahman he should serve his preceptor like unto Me with care and devotion. He should have perfect faith in him and should not find faults in him.

"But he who has not controlled the six human frailties or Shad Urmis, viz. sorrow, delusion, hunger, thirst, decay, death, who allows his senses to run riot, who has no discrimination, who has not attained distaste for the transient pleasures of this world or the next, who uses Sannyasa as a means of livelihood is a violator of Dharma or a destroyer of religion. He cheats the gods, himself and Me who dwells in his Self. His dirty sins or impurities are not yet washed off. Therefore he falls from this as well as from the other world. He is deprived of both this life and the life to come.

"The main duties of a Sannyasi are control of the mind and non-injury; those of a Vanaprasthi are austerity and discrimination or knowledge; those of a householder are protection of the lives of animals and performances of sacrifices; the main duty of a Brahmachari is wholehearted service to his preceptor.

"Celibacy with occasional gratification at prescribed times (Ritudharma), Tapas, purity, contentment and kindness to beings are also duties of a householder. Worshipping Me is a duty common to all.

"He who thus constantly worships Me practising the duties laid down for him and does not give his mind to any other and who thinks of Me in all beings, soon attains firm devotion to Me.

"O Uddhava! Through such unswerving devotion a person

attains to Me, the Supreme Ruler of all the worlds and all beings, the originator and destroyer of all, their cause, the Brahman.

"Having his mind thus purified by the performance of his duties and realising My nature, he attains knowledge (Jnana) and realisation (Vijnana) and reaches Me in a short time.

"This is the righteous course of conduct of those that are in the pale of Varna and Ashrama system and that course attended with devotion to Me becomes the best means of attaining emancipation or Moksha.

"So I have answered your question, as to how person discharging the duties of his caste or stage of life with devotion to Me, attains to Me, the Highest."

JNANA AND VIJNANA

The Lord said, "He who is endowed with theoretical knowledge of the Sastras and who has attained Self-realisation also, should finally resign to Me that knowledge also, knowing the universe of differences to be an illusion or the result of mere Maya.

"To a man of wisdom I alone am beloved. I alone am his purpose or the desired goal and the means thereto. I am his Svarga as well as Moksha. There is nothing else but Me which is dear to him.

"Those who have attained Jnana (theoretical knowledge) and Vijnana (Self-realisation) attain to My supreme abode or the highest goal. The sage is the most beloved of Me because he holds Me up with his knowledge.

"Tapas, pilgrimage to holy places and holy waters, repetition of the Mantra, charitable gifts, and many other purifying acts are not so helpful to attain that perfection which comes through a ray of direct Self-realisation.

"Therefore, O Uddhava! Know thyself in order to have Self-realisation, and possessed of Jnana and Vijnana, worship Me with a devout heart.

"By means of the sacrifice of knowledge and Self-realisation, sages have worshipped Me, the Atman and Lord of all sacrifices in their own Self (heart), and have attained perfection (Moksha).

"O Uddhava! The threefold modification, viz. birth, death, decay or the gross, subtle and causal bodies that appears to be in thee is merely Maya or illusion, for it occurs in the middle but it does not exist in the beginning or at the end. When birth and such other states affect this modification (body) what is that to you? Because in the case of an illusory object what really exists in the beginning and end alone exists in the middle also."

Uddhava said: "O Lord of the universe, O Lord who art in the form of the universe, please tell me how the ancient and pure knowledge together with dispassion, renunciation and realisation may be fully attained. Please also tell me about the method of devotion to Thee which is sought after by the great sages and even Brahma.

"O Lord! In the fearful path of Samsara, harassed by the threefold fires, viz. Adhyatmic (diseases, etc.), Adhidaivic (thunder, lightning, etc.) and Adhibhautic (scorpion-bite, snake-bite, etc.) and subjected to serve trial, O Lord, I do not see any shelter other than the umbrella of Thy feet that showers nectar, viz. the blissful Moksha. O most glorious Lord, because of my greed for the fleeting worldly pleasures I have got into the jaws of the python (time) which has dragged me into the abyss of the never-ending series of births and deaths. Lift me up, from this pit and graciously sprinkle me with Thy soothing words of wisdom that conduce to Moksha or the final emancipation."

The Lord said: "Formerly king Yudhishthira asked Bhisma, the foremost one of those versed in the love of Dharmas, in exactly this way to which we all listened.

"After the Mahabharata war was over, filled with sorrow for the slaughter of his kinsmen and friends, Dharmaputra sought the advice of Bhishma, and after asking him questions

on various subjects finally asked this question about emancipation or Moksha.

"I shall tell you of these which I heard from the lips of Bhishma and which are pregnant with high precepts on renunciation, Vijnana (realisation), faith, sincerity and devotion.

"That is true Vijnana, I consider, by which one sees in all beings the nine [viz. Prakriti, Purusha, Mahat (intellect), Ahamkara (egoism) and the five Tanmatras (five root-matter or fine matter or Sukshma Bhutas], the eleven, viz. the five organs of actions, the five organs of knowledge and mind, the five elements, viz. earth, water, etc. and the three Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas and also sees the one in all these beings.

"Now Vijnana is only this. The sage does not now see the many principles to be real or how the many is pervaded by the one. He no more beholds things pervaded by the one as before. He remains conscious of the one supreme cause, Brahman and of nothing else. He realises that the states of origin, subsistence, and destruction relate only to the things that are constituted of the three Gunas.

"That which, when one object is transformed into another, exists at its beginning, middle and end, and remains behind, when those objects return to their cause, is indeed the real or the existing Sat.

"The Vedas, direct perception, the sayings of great men and inference are the four Pramanas or proofs of knowledge. The world of transformation does not stand the test of any of them so the wise man becomes dispassionate to all things and renounces the world.

"All works are subject to change. They bear the seed of sorrow and have a limit of time. They can never create everlasting happiness. Therefore the wise man sees all the regions that may be attained by actions, from that of Brahma downwards, as miserable and transitory even like the world that is seen.

"O sinless one! I have already told you of Bhakti Yoga. I shall again tell you the chief means for the attainment of devotion to Me. Hear again what I say.

"Faith in the nectar-like tales of My deeds, expounding them to others after hearing, constantly singing of Me, steadiness in worshipping Me, singing hymns in praise of Me, delight in doing service to Me, bowing to Me with all the eight parts of the body, worship of My devotees which is even greater than the worship of Me, realisation of My presence or existence in all beings, looking upon all beings as Myself.

"Moving the limbs in doing acts dedicated to Me, singing My qualities, directing daily talks towards Me by talking about My attributes, resigning or offering the mind to Me, the giving up of all desires, giving up wealth, enjoyment, comforts and happiness for My sake, performing sacrifices, gifts and oblations, repeating Mantras, practising vows and austerities all for My sake, these are the chief means for the attainment of devotion to Me.

"O Uddhava! Those men who have surrendered themselves to Me develop devotion to Me by such pious acts. When once they attain My devotion, nothing else remains to be realised in this universe.

"When the mind full of Sattva and perfectly serene is resigned unto Me,—the Atman, and devotee attains righteousness, knowledge, dispassion or renunciation and divine powers of the state of Isvara.

"But when the mind runs after the pleasures of the senses, when it is set on anything different from Myself, i.e. on the phenomenal objects, when it runs astray with the senses, it becomes very impure with Rajas and gets attached to unreal objects and thus it becomes perverse and the man develops the very reverse of the above qualities, viz. unrighteousness, ignorance, attachment and weakness.

"Whatever promotes devotion to Me is Dharma; realisation of the oneness of Atman is Jnana or wisdom;

non-attachment to sense objects or the three Gunas and their products is dispassion; and the state of Isvara is to possess Anima and other powers."

YAMA AND NIYAMA

Uddhava said: "O Slayer of enemies! Of how many kinds are Yama and Niyama also? What is Sama? What is Dama, O Krishna? What is Titiksha? What is Dhriti? What is Dhanam? What is Tapas ? What is Sauryam? What is Satya? What is Rita? What is Tyaga? What Dhanam is worth coveting? What is Yajna? What is Dakshina? What is the strength of a man? What is Bhaga? What is Labha? What is Vidya? What is Hri? What is Para Sree? What is Sukha? What is Dukha? Who is a Pundit? Who is a fool? What is the path? What is the wrong path and its reverse? What is heaven? What is hell? Who is a relation? What is a house? Who is rich? Who is poor? Who is a Kripana? Who is a Lord? O Lord of the righteous, may Thou be pleased to answer these questions of mine, as well as their opposites."

The Lord said, "Yama consists of Ahimsa (non-injury), Satya or the practice of truth, Asteya (non-stealing), Asanga (non-attachment), Hri (modesty, shame), Asanchaya (non-accumulation of wealth or want of storing for the future), Astikya (faith in God), Brahmacharya (celibacy), Mouna (silence), Stairyam (steadiness, patience), Kshama (forgiveness), Abhaya (fearlessness).

"Niyama consists of Saucha (bodily and mental purity), Japa (repetition of Mantras or Names of the Lord), Tapas (austerity), Homa (offering of oblations in the sacred fire), Sraddha (faith), Atithya (hospitality), Archana (daily worship), Tirthatana (pilgrimage), Pararteha (working for the benefit of others), Tushti (contentment), and Acharya Sevana (service of the teacher or preceptor).

"If these groups of twelve virtues are rightly practised, they will surely produce results according to the desire of the practitioner. They will give either material prosperity or liberation.

"Sama is fixing the mind on Me and not mere mental quietness or calmness. Dama is the control of the senses. Titiksha is forbearance or fortitude. It is the bearing of grief or afflictions. Dhriti is restraint of the organs of taste and reproduction. To refrain from harming other creatures is the highest gift (Dana). Tapas is really the giving up of desires. Saurya (valour or heroism) is the conquest of one's nature. Satya is the practice of equality or looking upon everything with an equal eye.

"Ritam is, the wise say, speech both sweet and truthful. Saucha or purity is non-attachment to Karma. Tyaga is the giving up of work. The wealth to be coveted for is Dharma. I Myself am Yajna. The spiritual teaching or imparting of knowledge is Dakshina or religious remuneration or sacrificial gift. Control of Prana is the highest strength.

"Bhaga is my divine state having the six attributes. The best profit is devotion to Me. Vidya or learning is the removal of the idea of separation from Self. It is the annihilation of the idea of plurality in the Self. Hri is not merely modesty. It is shrinking from prohibited action or evil deeds. Sri is not merely riches but virtues such as spirit of independence, absence of desire. Sukha or happiness is the transcending of pleasure and pain. Dukha or misery is the hankering or longing after sense-pleasures. A Pundit or scholar is one who can distinguish between bondage and liberation.

"A fool is one who identifies himself with the body, who thinks that the body and its belongings are Atman. The right path is that which leads to Me. The wrong way is that which distracts the mind. The increase of Sattva is heaven. The increase of Tamas is hell. The relative is the preceptor, i.e. Myself, O friend. The house is the human body. The rich man is he who is full of excellent qualities.

"He is poor who is discontented. He who has not controlled his senses is mean, or helpless. He is Isvara who is not attached to the objects or the Gunas.

"O Uddhava! I have fully answered all your questions. Well what is the use of dilating on the characteristics of merit and defect (Guna Dosha)? To differentiate between good and bad is defect. To be free from both is good. To think of excellent points and defects is bad; not to think of them both is good."

THE THREE PATHS: KARMA, BHAKTI AND JNANA

Uddhava said: "O Lord of lotus-like eyes! 'To do' and 'not to do'; 'Karma is to be performed' and 'Karma is not to be performed', injunctions and prohibitions—both are Thy injunctions in the Vedas. The Vedas speak of merits and demerits in connection with Karma. They speak of Varna and Ashrama, of differences in time, space, age and objects, of Svarga and Naraka.

"How can Thy words consisting of injunctions and prohibitions lead men to the final emancipation or Moksha without the knowledge of distinction between good and bad or merit and defect?

"O Lord, the Vedas, Thy words are the highest source of illumination for the manes, the gods and men, regarding this unseen such as Moksha or Svarga, as well as the means and ends.

"The idea of distinction as good and bad, right and wrong is derived from Thy own command in the form of Vedas but not by one's fancy. It is not innate. The same scriptures undermine all ideas of difference. If that distinction is denied or refuted by the same Vedas, I am puzzled and confounded. Therefore, kindly enlighten me on this point ."

The Lord said: "In order to lead them to final happiness three Yogas or ways have been taught by Me. They are Jnana (knowledge), Karma (work) and Bhakti (devotion). There is no other means whatsoever of attaining Moksha.

"Jnana Yoga is for those who are disgusted with the performance of Karma and have renounced it. Karma Yoga is for those who are not disgusted with the performance of Karma but are attached to it and who desire for its fruits.

"He who has a faith in My actions, etc. by some good fortune, and at the same time, is neither disgusted with, nor intensely attached to work, is fit for Bhakti Yoga.

"One should perform work so long as he does not feel disgust for it or as long as he is not drawn by love for Me or until he has developed faith and veneration for listening to stories about Me and telling them to others, etc.

"O Uddhava, he who, following the Dharmas or duties of his own Varna and Ashrama, and performs sacrifices without any desire for fruits, does not go to heaven or hell, provided he does no prohibited act.

"He who practises the duties of his own Varna and Ashrama, observes piety and does nothing wrong or prohibited actions, attains pure knowledge and develops devotion to Me, remaining in this very world.

"Even those in heaven and hell desire this world because this life is conducive for developing knowledge and devotion whereas those two regions or the bodies with which the residents of heaven and hell are endowed are not useful for that purpose.

"The wise man does not wish for heaven or hell. He does not even wish for human existence, for connection with the body causes selfish distractions and delusion. He goes astray through attachment to the body.

"Being aware of this fact, he should be vigilant and strive for liberation before the approach of death, knowing that the body although it is perishable, can help him in the attainment of his goal or the highest good. Seeing that the tree on which it built its nest is being cut by cruel men, the bird abandons its attachment to the nest and tree and becomes happy by leaving its home. Even so, the wise man who observes and understands that his span of life is being cut short by the rotation of days and nights, shudders with fear and realises the Paramatman or the Supreme Self by abandoning all attachments. Then he is free

from all activities. Then he gives up all activities and thereby attains perfect freedom from Prakriti and remains peacefully.

"The human body which is the primal source of all attainments, is a strong boat, so hard to secure, yet within easy reach, so cheap when once attained. The preceptor is at the helm of this boat and I am the favourable wind that drives it. The man who does not strive to cross the ocean of births with such a boat and with such means as these is truly killing himself.

"When the Yogi feels disgust for Karma and becomes dispassionate he should keep the mind in a state of concentration by the practice of meditation on the Atman with his sense under control. When in the act of concentration the mind begins immediately to wander and is unsteady, he should be on the alert and bring it back under his control gradually with unremitting efforts after allowing it to go in its wandering course a little.

"Do not allow the mind to go its own way altogether. Keep your Pranas and senses under control and bring the mind under your control with the help of the intellect strengthened by Sattva.

"This sort of control of the mind is the highest Yoga, just like the control of an unruly horse. The horseman slackens the reins at first but never lets go the reins. Similarly the Yogi allows the mind to wander a little to have its own way for a while, keeps a vigilant watch over its movements and then brings it gradually under his control.

"Reflect on the origin and dissolution of all objects in the order of creation and in the reverse order according to the Sankhya method. Do this till the mind become calm.

"When the man becomes disgusted with the world and is endowed with dispassion, when he is able to reflect on what his preceptor has taught him, his mind abandons its evil disposition by virtue of the repeated exercises in meditation.

"The mind should be made to think of the only worthy thing Paramatman, by means of Yama and other practices of

Yoga or by a correct and thorough examination of the two categories and the knowledge gained thereby (reflecting on the true significance of Tat Tvam Asi Mahavakya)—but by no other means.

"If the Yogi does some reproachable and improper act inadvertently, he should burn the sin by Yoga alone but not by any other means, i.e. not by expiatory rites. [Japa of Mantra or taking Lord's Name, meditation on the Lord or Brahman, Kirtan, Brahma Chintan or Brahma Vichara will burn the sin of impurity.]

"Adherence to the duties of one's own sphere is said to be virtue (right). By making this distinction between merit and defect a restriction is placed on acts that are by nature impure for the purpose of enabling people to remove attachment to them.

"He who has reverential faith in tales about Me, who feels disgust for all actions, who knows that all desires are miseries and is yet incapable of renouncing them, such a man should worship Me with sincere devotion and firm faith; though experiencing those desires and objects he should condemn them as leading to misery.

"If a man constantly worships Me by means of Bhakti Yoga mentioned above, all the desires of his heart are destroyed as I Myself dwell in his heart.

"The bondage is broken asunder, all his doubts are dispelled and his Karmas are destroyed when I, the Atman of all, am realised.

"The practice of knowledge or dispassion is not of any use to the Yogi who has intense devotion to Me and has his mind fixed in Me, and who is Myself.

"Whatever is attained by righteous duties, austerities, knowledge, dispassion, Yoga, charity and many other means of attaining good—all that My devotee fully attains through the one course of devotion to Me—even heaven, or liberation, or My abode, if he cares to have it.

"My Bhaktas who are solely devoted to Me do not desire anything even if it be offered by Me, not even final liberation or absolute Moksha.

"Therefore to want nothing is the great and most efficacious way to attain the highest good. Therefore he who has no desires and cares for nothing attains devotion to Me.

"Merits and defects which arise from performance of actions enjoined and prohibited do not affect those devotees who are exclusively devoted to Me, the Supreme Being who is beyond the intellect. They are beyond the limits of Guna (merit) and Dosha (defect).

"Those who thus practise these paths to My attainment, the three Yogas that I have just taught, attain My abode of bliss or realisation of Brahman.

GUNA AND DOSHA

(Merit and Defect)

"Those who do not follow the three paths, viz. the paths of Bhakti, Jnana and Karma, but who only seek, the fulfilment of paltry desires become subject to birth and death.

"Devotion to the duties of one's caste or stage of station of life is Guna or merit. The reverse is Dosha or defect. This is the proper definition of Guna and Dosha. This is the conclusive view in respect of both merit and defect.

"Purity (Suddhi) or impurity (Asuddhi), right or merit (Guna) or wrong or defect (Dosha), auspiciousness (Subha) or inauspiciousness (Asubha) are terms applied to the same objects in relation to religion (Dharma), society (Vyavahara) and living (Yatra) respectively.

"I have explained or laid down Achara or rules of life for those, who want to be guided by Dharma. In order to know the righteous path as distinct from the unrighteous, how a certain course is admissible in a Brahmana or Kshatriya and the like and what may be adopted for the sake of barely sustaining life, O sinless one, this customary course of conduct has been

explained by Me as Manu and other law-givers, to those who are disposed to bear the burden termed the righteous courses of Karma.

"The body of all beings from Brahma down to the least inanimate particle is composed of earth, water, fire, air and ether. They are all ensouled by Atman.

"O Uddhava, though their bodies are thus similar, yet the Vedas have created distinct names and forms as Varna, Ashrama, in order that creatures may attain their distinct purpose, viz. Dharma, Artha, Kama or Moksha in respect of bodies of the same kind, working under the rules laid down for each. [The object is to put a limit to the natural inclinations and thereby to secure Dharma, Artha, etc.]

"In order to regulate actions I enjoin merits and defects regarding things in respect of place, time and other conditions.

"Those lands where there is no black deer and where devotion to Brahmanas is absent are impure. Even if they are full of deer, the tracts known as Kikata and those that are barren should be considered as impure unless there be righteous people in them.

"That time is good when it is fittest for performing Vedic duties, either by its own nature or by the proper supply of the required articles, whereas that Time is considered bad or unfit when the Vedic observances cannot be attended to for lack of things and other circumstances.

"Certain things become pure or impure when they are in contact with certain other things, by purificatory ceremony by time, by quality or volume, great or small; certain things do or do not defile any one according as he is or he is not physically able to abide by the rule, as he knows or not, is rich or poor, or as he is affected by them with reference to place, state and other circumstances. [Rain water that is collected in a tank is regarded pure after ten days. Food becomes impure if it is kept for some hours. A pot of water is easily rendered impure but not so the

water of a tank. If a man knows of the birth of his son within ten days, he is under pollution.]

"The purifying process of grain, wood, bone (like ivory), textiles, threads, liquids, household utensils, skins, earthen things, oil, ghee, gold, skins and metallic wares is done as the case may be by time, air, fire, earth and water either singly or in combination.

"If anything is smeared with some impure stuff, that which purifies it is considered the purifier, till it removes the smell and the coating of the impurity and restores it to its natural state.

"Bathing, charity, Tapas, ceremonies like the wearing of the sacred thread, remembering the Lord and His Name, Sandhya, prayer and meditation according to stages of life and strength purify a man. Thus purified, a twice-born should proceed to do his duty or religious acts.

"The purity of the Mantras arises from properly knowing it from the preceptor. Mantra has force, purity and efficacy. Actions become pure if they are offered unto Me. The purity of the above six factors, viz. place, time, substance, agent, Mantra and specified acts leads to righteousness, and the absence of it to unrighteousness.

"Sometimes what is said to be good may become bad and what is bad may become good in the light of the rule or on account of an injunction. Thus the rule that defines things as good and bad acts abolishes their distinction.

"In the case of those who have once fallen, any of their acts common to all in that state or the doing of any evil deed does not become the cause of further fall; association with the opposite sex is allowable in the case of a householder; for the person already lying low on the ground has no fear of a further fall.

"From whatever one abstains, one gets rid of that. This is the righteous course or conduct that leads to the happiness of men and removes their sorrow, delusion and fear.

"By mistaking external objects to be good, man gets

attached to them; from attachment arises the desire to possess them and desire leads to quarrel among men.

"Dispute or quarrel generates intense anger which is followed by confusion or infatuation. Infatuation destroys his intelligence and sense of right and wrong.

"O good one, when the intelligence becomes clouded and perverted on account of Tamas, he is reduced almost to nothing. Like a man in swoon or like a dead man he falls from his purpose or misses the goal of his life.

"He is passionately attached to objects and knows neither himself nor the Supreme Self. He in vain vegetates like a plant and merely breathes like the bellows.

" 'Those who perform Yajna attain Svarga'—sayings like these which are contained in the Vedas which treat of the fruits of works do not speak of final bliss. They do not show a way to salvation. They are only tempting words really meant for the attainment of Moksha, just like words said to a child to induce him to take medicine. The father says, 'Drink this bitter medicine. I shall give you sugar candy.' The child takes the medicine. But the sugar candy is not what he gets, for his real gain is recovery from disease. Even so these inducements will create a taste in men for attaining Self-realisation. People are led by means of these tempting prospects to attain the final emancipation.

"From their very birth men are attracted to sense-objects, to their lives, and powers, and to their relatives. These are only sources of misery and bondage.

"How can the Vedas recommend sense enjoyments to people, who, ignorant of their purpose, are already wandering in the path of misery and falling into blinding darkness, and who follow the teachings of the Vedas (Karma Kanda)? Why should the Vedas teach them attachment to such things? Some ignorant people say so without knowing the purport of the Vedas. They talk of the flowery descriptions of the fruits of works mentioned in the Karma Kanda of the Vedas. But those who know the true

meaning of the Vedas do not talk about the promise of fruits. [The view that the Veda teaches the way to the attainment of Svarga or fleeting pleasures is incorrect. The real purpose of the Veda is to teach the way to final emancipation.]

"Those who are full of desires, who are mean and greedy, who mistake flowers for fruits , i.e. who regard unreal objects as real are deluded by sacrifices performed with the help of fire, which lead them to Pitriyana or the path of smoke. They are born again on this earth after temporary enjoyment in Svarga. They never know the truth of their own Self.

"O dear one, though I am seated in their heart, though I am the cause of the universe, yet they do not know Me, because they only talk of sacrificial acts and seek to satisfy their own appetites like those whose eyesight is dimmed by mist.

"If one has a passion for killing animals, it is restricted to sacrifices. He may satisfy it only in sacrifices. It is not a rule compelling anybody to kill. These wicked people who want to satisfy their senses do not understand My viewpoint. They take delight in killing animals for their own pleasure and worship the gods, the Pitris and ghosts by killing animals in sacrifices.

"Imagining to be real that world (Svarga) which is unreal like a dream and only pleasing to the ear, they thirst after enjoyments there and with that hope spend their money in sacrifices, just as a merchant spends his money in speculation and in the hope of profit.

"People who are rooted in Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, worship Indra and other gods who also are associated with Rajas, Sattva and Tamas, but they do not worship Me.

"They think, 'worshipping the gods here by means of sacrifices, we shall go to heaven and enjoy there and at the end of the period of enjoyment shall again be born here in noble families and attain vast possessions.'

"Men whose minds are drawn away by these honeyed words of the scriptures, who are proud and greedy do not relish even a reference to Me.

"The three divisions of the Vedas really treat of the identity of Jiva and Brahman. They are really meant to convey the truth of the oneness of the individual soul and the Supreme Soul. But the Mantras (Vedas) are indirect in their meaning. They say things which are not what they appear to be on the surface and I like this indirectness. [Because only those pure and pious men who understand the true significance will renounce works. If these are openly expressed, all people will abandon works before they are ready or fit to understand the truths of Vedanta.]

"The Sabda Brahman or the Veda is very difficult to understand. It is the product of Prana, the faculty of speech and mental faculty. It is conditioned by the Pranas, the mind and the organs. It is most subtle, unlimited, very deep and unfathomable like the ocean.

"Speech or sound has a subtle and gross form. Para, Pasyanti and Madhyama are subtle. They remain deep and unfathomable like the ocean. Only Vaikhari becomes manifested in the Vedas originating in Pranava and appearing through the letters of the alphabet and the metres. Para is manifested in the Prana, Pasyanti in mind, Madhyama in the Indriyas. That stage which is about to issue through the vocal organs as articulate speech is known as Vaikhari. Vaikhari finds manifestation in articulate expression.

"It is charged with My presence and strengthened by Me, who am perfect, unchanged and unlimited in powers and it is perceived as sounds or OM in all beings by the inner Yogic vision of Yogis like the slender fibres in a lotus stalk.

"Just as a spider projects its web from its heart through its mouth, so also the Lord Hiranyagarbha whose form is the Vedas projects out of OM or Pranava through His mind, the Vedas, which proceed in a thousand ways graced with consonants, vowels, aspirates, semi-vowels evolved out of Pranava and which becomes expressed into wonderful forms of speech or language with four dominant metres. Hiranyagarbha withdraws everything into Himself at the end of a cycle, just as the spider also withdraws its web into itself.

"Some of the metres are: Gayatri, Ushnik, Anushtup, Brihati, Pankti, Trishtup, Jagati, Atijagati, Atichandas, Atyashti and Ativirat.

"What the Vedas lay down, what they explain, what they recapitulate and deal for discussion—the secret of this nobody knows in this world other than Myself.

"The Vedas lay down rules to worship Me. They describe Me. I am described in various forms. What is stated therein to be refuted is also I. This is the meaning of all the Vedas. The Vedas that treat of Me as their substratum state that duality and difference are merely illusion and are the result of Maya. They deny finally all differences and cease to do their function."

THE TATTVAS

Uddhava said: "O Lord of the universe! How many Tattvas (categories or the fundamental principles or primordial factors) are there in the world as described by the sages or Rishis? Some give the number as twenty-eight, others eleven, nine, five and three. The Rishis gave the number differently.

"Some say it is twenty-six, others twenty-five, some speak of seven, some nine, or six or four or eleven, seventeen, or sixteen, and some again thirteen.

"Kindly tell me, O Immortal One, the purpose or standpoint which the Rishis have in view in giving the number differently."

"The Lord said: "Each number is correct according to the exposition and standpoint of the particular teacher who fixes the number according to his views. For those who accept the basis of My Maya and explain things, what theory is not possible to maintain? [The discussion about the number is useless. The principles are interpenetrating. This order and their number are therefore differently understood. This universe is an illusion. Therefore one may have any sort of view of the universe. Mirage is false. To talk of the depth of the water in the mirage, how much the earth has become wet by the water of the mirage is all useless.]

"There need be no discussion if the teacher understands each others standpoint. But if the teacher has egoism and if his mind is clouded by My forces of delusion, discussions inevitably arise. 'It is not as you say. What I say is the fact'—This sort of dispute over the issue is due to My powers Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which are very difficult to get rid of.

"From the various combinations of these powers or principles, arise the matter for dispute, viz. difference in theories. When one attains calmness of mind (Sama), and self-control (Dama) the difference ceases to be seen and the discussion or dispute vanishes with it.

"There is mutual interpenetration among the principles. So their enumeration proceeds in a relation of cause and effect in accordance with the view of the particular exponent.

"In the same Tattva whether it is cause or effect all the other Tattvas or principles are found included. [The effects such as pot, cloth, ornaments, etc. are inherent in a subtle form in the cause (clay, thread or gold), which again interpenetrates or permeates through the effects.]

"Some of the elementary truths as given by a set of teachers will include two or more of the elementary truths as given by others, according to the standpoint, the teacher sets up for himself. In tracing effects to their cause, or in discussing cause and effect, according to the ingenuity and logic of each teacher, the numbers might be arranged or shuffled.

"The relation of these principles as cause and effect and their number may vary according to the power of speech which any teacher may command, and every such position should be accepted as correct, because there is an explanation for it.

"As man is under the influence of beginningless ignorance, he cannot have Self-realisation without the help of a preceptor. He who knows Brahman only can impart that knowledge of the Self. Such a preceptor is Parameshvara who is distinct from the Jiva. Hence some hold that the principles are twenty-six.

"Some hold that the principles are twenty-five. Because there is no difference at all between the Purusha (Soul) and Isvara (God). It is not right to take them as two different principles. Knowledge is but an attribute or property of Prakriti.

"Prakriti is equilibrium of the Gunas which belong only to Prakriti and not to Atman. The Gunas are Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, the causes respectively of the subsistence, origin and destruction of the world.

"Knowledge is the result of Sattva, activity of Rajas and ignorance of Tamas. Time is Isvara who causes the disturbance in the Gunas. Svabhava or tendency is Sutra or Mahat Tattva.

"Purusha, Prakriti, Mahat (Vyakta), Ahamkara, Akasa, air, fire, water and earth—these are the nine principles I mentioned.

"The ear, skin, eye, nose and palate are the five organs of knowledge (Jnana Indriyas); the tongue, hand, leg, genitals and anus are the five organs of action (Karma Indriyas). O dear one, the mind is both. These are the eleven principles or Tattvas.

"Sound, touch, form or colour, taste and smell are the five sense-objects. Speech, work, motion, excretion, generation are the functions of the organs of action.

"In the beginning when this universe is projected, Prakriti assumes the forms of cause and effect through the Gunas such as the Sattva, etc. and is liable to every such state or modification. But the intelligent Purusha remains unmodified. He simply witnesses the work of Prakriti.

"Mahat Tattva and other principles are charged with power through the glance of the Purusha. Being supported by the Prakriti they combine together and form the universe. At every stage of creation the gracious immanence of Purusha directs or gives the necessary impetus for the creation.

"Some hold that the fundamental principles or categories are only seven and they are the five elements beginning with Akasa, Jiva, and the Supreme Self which is the substratum or support of both the seer and the seen, the subject and the object. From these seven arise the body, the senses and the Pranas.

"Again according to another view they are six, viz. the five elements and the Supreme Self, who has made all this, viz. the body, the world and everything else and entered into them.

"Where four is given as the number, the Atman and the three main elements, viz. earth, water and fire which form the envelope of the Atman in different bodies are alone included. The universe is produced by these four. If it be eleven, the Atman, the five elements and the five senses form the categories.

"Where seventeen is given as the number, the five elements, the five objects (Vishayas, sound, touch, etc.), the five senses (ear, skin, etc.) with the mind and Atman are included. When sixteen is the number given, the Atman itself is taken as the mind. The mind is included in the Atman. When thirteen is given, the five elements, the five organs, the mind and the twofold Atman as Jiva and Paramatman make up the thirteen principles.

"When eleven is given as the number, the Atman, the five elements and the five organs are taken into account.

"When nine is given as the number, the eight Prakritis, viz. Prakriti, Mahat, egoism, and the five subtle elements and the Purusha make up the nine principles.

"Thus the different ways of reckoning the principles have been adopted by the sages or Rishis.

"Every view is correct. There is some reason for it. Can there be anything wrong in what the wise say?"

PRAKRITI AND PURUSHA

Uddhava said: "O Krishna, though the Prakriti and Purusha seem by nature distinct from each other, yet their distinction is not evident as they are never found apart. Atman is seen in Prakriti (body) and Prakriti is seen in Atman.

"O Pundarikaksha (lotus-eyed), Omniscient Lord, O Lord of Prakriti, may Thou be pleased to remove the great doubt in my mind with Thy words skilled in reasoning. Through Thy

grace people derive knowledge and through Thy power they lose their knowledge. Therefore Thou alone knowest the true course of Thy Maya and no other."

The Lord said: "O bull among men! Prakriti and Purusha are essentially different. They are entirely distinct entities. Prakriti is insentient and changing. Purusha is sentient and unchanging. The body is the modification of the three Gunas. This universe is constituted of three Gunas. The combination of the three Gunas has produced this universe. It is subject to modifications. A disturbance in the equilibrium of the three Gunas has projected this universe.

"O dear one, My Maya composed of the three Gunas creates through these Gunas countless modifications and notions. The modification or the universe is threefold, viz. Adhyatma (relating to the body), Adhidaiva (relating to the gods), Adhibhuta (relating to the creatures).

"The eye or the organ of seeing is Adhyatma; colour or form is Adhibhuta; the ray of the sun or the presiding deity Surya or sun is Adhidaiva. These depend upon one another for their manifestation; but the sun which is in the sky exists independently.

"But Atman which is the cause of all these (Adhibhuta, etc.) is different from them. Further He gives light to all agents that illuminate things through His own self-luminosity. Similarly are to be viewed the senses of touch, hearing, taste, smell and the mind, etc. The skin is in relation with touch and air; the ear with sound and the quarters, the tongue with taste and Varuna; the nose with smell and the Aswins; the mind with Sankalpa and the moon; Buddhi with discrimination and Brahma; Chitta with memory and Vasudeva; Ahamkara with identification and Rudra.

"The modification brought about by the disturbance of the Gunas is produced out of Mahat which has its cause the Prakriti and that becomes the threefold Ahamkara, viz. Vaikarika, Tamasa and Aindriya, the cause of delusion and doubt

characterised by ignorance. (Sattvika is Adhidaiva; Tamasic is Adhibhuta; Rajasic is Adhyatma).

"The dispute as to whether the Atman is or is not, the dispute that centres on a difference of views merely is the result of not realising the Atman. Though it is thus baseless, it does not vanish from those whose mind is turned away from beholding their Atman."

REINCARNATION

Uddhava said: "O Lord, how do those whose mind is not devoted to Thee take on and give up, through their own actions, bodies high and low? This point cannot be properly understood by creatures of poor understanding. Mostly there are none indeed in this world who know this as they are deluded by Thy Maya."

The Lord said: "The mind of men imprinted with Karma or full of Karma of active tendencies due to past actions, moves with the five senses from body to body, from one plane to another. The Atman who is distinct from it follows the mind under the denomination of 'I' or force of egoism.

"The mind after death, things of such objects seen or heard of as the Karma of men place before it. It awakes unto those objects it thinks of and sleeps over the past or previous objects. The memory that connects the present with the past states dies away in consequence. The new body is remembered and the old body is forgotten.

"When one loses all thoughts of one's body in the preceding life through his intense attachment to the present body through some cause or other, that utter forgetfulness is his death. Man obtains a Deva body or a low body which undergoes inflictions or tortures after his death. He entirely forgets his former body either through intense enjoyment in the former case or through pain in the latter case. This is the death of the Jiva who identified with his former body and not the annihilation of his body itself. The Jiva identifies himself with these new bodies and forgets entirely his former physical body. The

connection with the former body is entirely cut off in his mind. This constitutes his death with reference to his former body.

"The birth of a Jiva is the acceptance of a body as his own Self. It is even like dream or fancy.

"In dream or fancy a man does not know his present Self as the former Self. The mind attaches itself to a new body and causes a birth into that body. He does not remember his relation to his previous body because death and the new body entirely cut off the memory. He thinks himself to be a new man, although he is not new.

"Just as a man in dream, creates and sees many bodies, so also this threefold division, viz. Adhidaiva, etc. which is the creation of the mind, is the cause of perceiving difference as the external and internal things projected on the real Atman and is the source of evil like one who gives birth to a wicked son. Though a father may have neither friend nor enemy, he is affected by the connections formed by his wicked son. Similar is the case with Atman. O dear one, every moment creatures are continually born and die. But this is not perceptible on account of the extreme subtlety and inconceivable velocity of time. As in the case of flames, currents of water or the fruits of a tree, so in the case of all creatures, age and other conditions are produced by time in unbroken succession.

"As in the case of flames the notion and the statement that this is that very lamp, or in the case of streams that is that very water are false, so also are the notion and the statement that this is that very man which men of unreal life falsely hold in their mind and talk about. The particles of flame and water are continually changing. The flame is different at every moment. The stream brings different particles of water to a spot at every moment. The understanding and the words of ignorant men are all confounding because they speak and think believing that the same body continues.

"Neither is this man born nor does he die by the seed of his own Karma. He is immortal. The notion of birth and death is

itself a delusion with reference to Self. Through illusion even the unborn seems to be born, even the immortal seems to die like fire in a piece of wood though Agni continues to exist the end of Kalpa. Conception, embryo state, birth, childhood, boyhood, youth, middle age, old age and death—these are the nine states of the body.

"These imaginary states, high and low, relating to the body, some one thinks as his own through association with the Gunas and some one abandons them through the grace of the Lord and the practice of discrimination.

"One's own birth and death may be inferred from those of one's son and father. The Atman who is the witness, who knows that the bodies only are subject to birth and death is not affected by either birth or death.

"He who sees the origin of a tree from a seed and its destruction, is distinct from the tree. So also the seer or witness of the body is distinct from it.

"One is bound down to the wheel of birth and death by lack of discrimination. The ignorant man does not thus see the Atman to be distinct from the Prakriti (body) and takes them both to be identical. He is deluded by the sense-objects and forges for himself an endless chain of births and deaths.

"One becomes a sage or a God by association with Sattva, Asura or man by association with Rajas, and a ghost or a beast by association with Tamas.

"Just as a man seeing the performance of singers and dancers involuntarily imitates them in his mind, so also even the Atman is made to imitate the attributes of the intellect by witnessing its qualities.

"Just as the trees reflected in moving water seem to be moving also, so also the earth seems to roll when the eyes are rolling. The movements of the Prakriti are superimposed on the immovable Atman.

"Just as imaginations and dream visions are unreal, so also

the Samsara or the experience of objects is unreal to Atman, O Uddhava.

"Births and deaths are as unreal as are dreams but they have an existence even as objects in dream have an existence. Even though the world is unreal, the Samsara does not vanish to that man who is thinking of the sense-objects like the experiences of evils in dream.

"Therefore, O Uddhava, do not indulge in enjoying the objects through the outgoing organs. Never allow your mind to be tainted by desire and run out through the avenues of the senses. Note that the delusion of plurality is caused by ignorance and non-perception of the Atman.

"Whatever others may say or do unto you, do not care the least about that, but through single-minded devotion, patience, discrimination, enquiry and meditation realise the Atman. Whatever wicked people might do towards you, even if they beat, insult, ridicule, scorn, bind or deprive you of your means of living, spit at you, do bodily injury to you, throw dirt or excretions at you to draw you from your penance, even if you are thus harmed in various ways by the ignorant and put in difficulties, remember that you are the immortal soul and that nothing can affect or taint you if you keep your mind pure and realise you are the immortal Atman and nothing else."

Uddhava said: "It is very difficult to discard or endure the insults of the wicked and keep peace of mind. Except your devotees who have firm faith in your grace, who have taken shelter at Thy feet, who practise the religion taught by Thee, who are even-minded, no others including even the learned can overcome the frailties of nature or the force of Your Maya. Human nature is human nature, O Lord. It is too strong or powerful for men. Therefore, O best of teachers! O Lord of the universe, Antaryamin of all, kindly explain, how even an ordinary mortal can attain such tranquillity of mind to disregard the taunts and insults of the wicked. Please explain to me in such a way that I may grasp it."

ENDURANCE

(*Song of an ascetic—Story of Avanti Brahmin*)

The Lord said: "O disciple of Brihaspati, there is not in the world a sage who can control his mind when he is pierced by harsh words of the wicked.

"Even arrows aimed and directed with force at the most vital parts of a man will not give so much pain as the cruel harsh words of the wicked which rankle in the heart for ever.

"O Uddhava, I shall narrate to you a very sacred story of ancient times. Listen to it with rapt attention. It was recited by an ascetic who was ill-treated by the wicked, but who bore it with great patience and fortitude, and who thought it was all due to his own past actions. This was sung by him.

"There lived in Avanti a very wealthy Brahmin. But he led a very miserable life. He earned money by the evil ways of the world. He did business. He was miserly, covetous and very irritable. He did not spend anything in charity. He did not greet his relations or guest with kind words even. He never even attended to the comforts of himself, his wife, children or servants. He was a human iron-safe hoarding and guarding money. He dwelt in a house unkown to all religious activities.

"As he led such a miserly and impure life, his sons and relatives did not like him. His wife, daughters and servants got so much disgusted that they would not do what he liked. He took pleasure only in hoarding money. He was destitute of righteousness. He never enjoyed his life. So he lost both this life and the next. The gods presiding over the five Yajnas or daily sacrifices grew very angry.

"O liberal Uddhava, his stock of merits was exausted through his neglect of the five claimants. Even the wealth which he had hoarded with great pains and exertion was lost.

"O Uddhava, some of his wealth was taken by his relatives. Thieves laid their hands on some. He lost another portion by the anger of the gods or calamities or accidents and by the lapse of time. Some of it was taken by men and kings.

When his wealth was thus lost he was neglected and cast away by his own people. He was very much afflicted at heart when he reflected that his wealth had never been used for the satisfaction of his own desires or for righteousness.

"He shed tears when he reflected on his pitiable condition and his voice was choked. He developed intense disgust for the world. He attained Vairagya or distaste for worldly possessions and enjoyments like an ascetic.

"He said to himself, 'My experience has indeed been bitter. Alas! Woe unto me! I deserve it. I have tormented my body in hoarding wealth. I have not utilised the wealth for the attainment of my desires or righteousness. I have gained neither righteousness nor my own pleasures.

" 'Generally the wealth of the miserly does not contribute to their comfort or happiness. It only leads to their affliction in this world and leads them to hell and loss of their soul after their death.

" 'The spotless fame of a renowned man and the excellent qualites of a virtuous man are spoiled by greed, however little it may be, just as a small patch of white skin or leucoderma spoils even the most beautiful forms.

" 'In acquiring wealth, in improving it when got, in protecting it, in spending it, in its loss and use, men experience only exertion, fear, anxiety and delusion.

" 'Theft, injury to others, falsehood, hypocrisy, lust, anger, pride, haughtiness, discord, enmity, distrust, envy, over-indulgence in women, wine and gamblings—these fifteen evils pertaining to men have indeed, their source in wealth. Therefore one who is desirous of obtaining the highest good should abandon the evil known as wealth from a distance.

" 'Also brothers, wives, fathers and friends fall out and soon become enemies for the sake of a small sum of money.

" 'For the sake of a little money they quarrel and become enraged. They abandon all prior remembrance and affection,

and out of jealousy stand in the way of one another, attack and kill one another.

" 'Having attained a human birth which is covetable even by gods and a high place, viz. the foremost life of a Brahmin, those who neglect this and spoil their own interests (viz. Self-realisation) surely reach the most miserable end.

" 'Having attained this human body, the gateway to heaven and emancipation, which mortal man would be attached to wealth, the abode of all evil?

" 'The miser who hoards and guards his wealth like a Yaksha, who does not share it with the gods, the Rishis, the Pitris, relatives, friends, lower animals who all deserve a share, and does not use it for his own self, falls down.

" 'My life and strength were carelessly spent in the vain acquisition of wealth, by which men of discrimination attain their goal. What can I do now in my old age?

" 'Why do even learned men who know that wealth is the source of all evils exert much to obtain wealth which tends to no good purpose? Surely this world is totally deluded by the Maya of someone.

" 'What is the use of wealth or other acquisitions, desire or objects of desire, for a man who is in the grip of death? What is the use of Karma as it will only involve him in a never-ending series of births and deaths?

" 'Certainly that glorious Lord Hari, who is the Lord of the universe, who is the embodiment of all the gods, is immensely pleased with me, for He has brought me to this state in which I am endowed with Vairagya or dispassion which is a raft or a boat for me to cross the ocean of Samsara or ocean of births and deaths.

" 'I shall lead the rest of my life, if at all there is any left, in penance, I shall find delight in Atman only. I shall do all that tends to the attainment of highest good. I shall lead a virtuous life and strive for my salvation. May the gods, the rulers of the

three worlds bless me to attain this state. Raja Katwanga, attained the abode of Brahma within an hour.' "

The Lord said: "Having thus resolved in his mind, the great Brahmin of Avanti cut off all desires and also the knot of egoism in his heart and became a Sannyasin. He also became tranquil in mind.

"He wandered alone over the earth with perfect control over his mind, senses and Pranas and he just entered towns and villages for the sake of alms. No one knew who he was. Wicked people surrounded, mocked and ill-treated the old and ugly monk in various ways.

"Some took away his bamboo staff, some his begging bowl and water pot, some his seat and someone his rosary and some again, his torn clothes.

"They would offer to give them back and when he came near laugh at him and refuse to give them. Sometimes they returned those things but again snatched them from him. At other times when he was eating his alms near a lake or a tank, they would pour excretions or spit over his head. They made him speak when he was observing silence and beat him if he did not do so.

"Others said, 'This man is a thief.' Some tied with a rope and some said, 'Kill him, Kill him.' Some abused and taunted him and said, 'He is a rogue posing himself to be a righteous man. Having lost all his wealth and being abandoned by his relatives, he has taken to this course of life.'

" 'Oh, he is very strong. He endures all taunts and remains unshaken like a mountain. He is very resolute like a heron. He wants to gain his purpose by silence.'

"Some mocked him often, while others tied him with ropes to a pillar or a tree, making sport of him as if he were a toy or a bird.

"Whatever affliction or trouble thus befell him caused by the elements or the gods or his own body, he thought they were predestined and therefore must be patiently borne.

"Even though he was insulted and treated with contempt by wicked men, even though they tried to make him abandon his saintly course he stuck to his path of righteousness, quite steadily and sang the following song.

" 'The Brahmin said, 'Neither this body nor these people nor the gods, nor the Atman, nor planets, nor Karma nor time is the cause of my pleasure or pain. The wise say or the Srutis declare that it is the mind that is the true cause of pleasure and pain, as it sets in motion the wheel of Samsara.

" 'The mind creates desire and the like. It makes the various Gunas function and through them brings about various Karmas, good, bad or indifferent for the attainment of such desires. By such actions man gets into bondage or Samsara (chain of births and deaths) and attains different kinds of birth according to the nature of his actions.

" 'Atman is the self-effulgent, inactive, silent witness of the activities of the mind. He is the friend of the Jiva. The Jiva identifies himself with the mind on account of ignorance, and thinks he is the actor. In reality it is the mind that does everything. Who enjoys sense-objects through desires and mind's active qualities and thus becomes bound.

" 'Charity, the performance of duties of his own Varna and Ashrama, the observance of Yamas and Niyamas, the study of the Vedas, virtuous actions and the good observances as fasting on Ekadasi—all these lead to the control of mind. The control of the mind is the highest form of Yoga.

" 'When one's mind is controlled and tranquil, of what use are charity and the rest for him? If his mind is uncontrolled and restless, of what use, again, are this charity and the rest?

" 'The gods and the organs presided over by them, are under the control of the mind, but the mind never comes under the control of any one else. This is a formidable God stronger than the strongest. Therefore, he who can control the mind is indeed the God of gods.

" 'Without curbing or conquering this strong invincible

enemy of irresistible force within, that cuts the very vital parts, some foolish people try to achieve victories outside creating friends, enemies, or neutrals. Those who do not conquer the mind make friends and enemies.

" 'Deluded men think, 'This is my body' and they go astray. They mistake this body, a mere creation of the mind to be their own and their selves. They are deluded by the wrong notions of 'I', 'thine' and 'he'. They think 'He is different' and thus wander in the unlimited wilderness of ignorance.

" 'If the body is the cause of pleasure and pain, the Atman has nothing to do with it, because it concerns the two bodies which are made up of the same earth. The two bodies are really one body. If people are the cause of my pleasure and pain, the Atman or source of bliss immanent in me as the only real eternal factor, is present in all of them. If sometimes any one bites his own lips or tongue with his own teeth inadvertently, with whom should he be angry for the pain?

" 'If the deity is the cause of pain, the Atman has nothing to do with it, because it is related to two deities, i.e. to the two organs presided over by the two deities. The Devatas who guide the senses are the same in all beings. If you beat another man in his hand, the presiding deity of the hand, viz. Indra is the same in both. What has this to do with the Atman? It always remains unaffected. If sometimes, in the same body of a man one limb strikes against another, with whom should he become angry?

" 'If the Atman is the cause of pleasure and pain, such experience must be considered unreal as the Vedas declare that the essence of Atman is bliss and that all things but Atman are unreal and transitory.

" 'If the Atman or one's own Self is the cause of pleasure and pain, evidently nothing in that case happens from another. In that case the cause is one's own nature, pleasure and pain are of the essence of itself, because there is nothing besides the Atman. If there be, it must be unreal. Therefore how could there be then any occasion for anger? With whom should one become

angry? There is neither pleasure nor pain. Atman only really exists.

" 'If the planets be the cause of pleasure and pain, what have they then to do with Atman who is unborn, because the planets affect the body only? Further, one planet exercise an adverse influence on another planet. The Atman is entirely different from either the planet or the body. With whom then should one become angry?

" 'If work be the cause of pleasure and pain, how can it affect or touch the pure, actionless and Immortal Atman, because work is possible to any agency which happens to be unintelligent and intelligent? But the body is unintelligent and the Atman is pure intelligence. Therefore Karma which is supposed to be the cause for pleasure and pain does not exist at all. Then with whom should one become angry?

" 'If Time be the cause of pleasure and pain, how can it affect the Atman, because Atman is Himself Time. Certainly fire cannot be adversely affected by heat, nor snow by cold. The pairs of opposites cannot affect the immortal Atman which is beyond them. Therefore who should be angry with whom?

" 'He who has attained illumination has fear from no one else. The Atman which is beyond Prakriti is not affected by the pairs of opposites. Ahamkara only is the cause of Samsara. Ahamkara only is affected by the pairs of opposites.

" 'So I shall practise this devotion to the Supreme Self which the most ancient Rishis had, and I shall cross the unlimited ocean of ignorance.' "

The Lord said: "This was the song sung by that sage who lost his wealth and attained dispassion, who roamed over the earth as a Sannyasin free from anxiety and who remained unshaken from his righteous course, though he was thus ill-treated and insulted by the wicked.

"The cause of happiness or misery is no other than one's self. It is a delusion of the mind. This world consisting of

friends, neutrals and enemies which affects a man with pleasure and pain is a delusion of the mind caused by ignorance.

"Therefore, O child! Control the mind perfectly by fixing it on Me. Restrain the activities of the mind by the force of your intellect. This is the very gist of Yoga. This is in brief all Yoga. This is the highest aim and end of Yoga.

"Whoever with a serene mind studies, recites before others or hears this song of the tranquil, self-restrained Sannyasi immersed in Brahman is not overpowered by the pairs of opposites."

SANKHYA

The Lord said: "Now I shall tell you about the Sankhya system propounded by the ancient seers (Kapila and others); having known this, man can at once cast aside the delusion caused by diversity.

"In the beginning before the origin of the Yugas (in Pralaya) and in the Satya Yuga at the beginning of the cycle, when people were strong in determination, there was but one thing without difference, the perfect consciousness (seer) or Brahman. There was no division of seer and seen or knower and knowable, subject and object. It was all one homogeneous consciousness, pure Chit alone (Chinmatra). All the objective existence was one and the same. It was absorbed in Brahman. The seer and the whole universe were one and the same.

"That great thing Brahman, the absolute Truth, the homogeneous essence, the only living Reality which is beyond the reach of mind and speech became twofold by means of Maya, the visible, objective universe, and the thinking subject. Of the two, one is Prakriti possessed of two aspects, viz. cause and effect, and the other is Jnana or knowledge absolute which is called Purusha.

"To give fruits to the Karmas of Jivas I disturbed the equilibrium of the Prakriti. When I agitated her under the eye of Purusha, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas became manifest. The Gunas gave rise to Sutra (thread), also called Mahat which is always

joined to Sutra. From the transformation of Mahat was produced egoism which causes delusion in the Jiva.

"Egoism is threefold—Sattvic or Vaikaric, Rajasic or Taijasa and Tamasic. Mind and the eleven gods or presiding deities of organs came from Sattvic Ahamkara, the organs came from Rajasic Ahamkara, the Tanmatras or the fine particles of matter (the root elements or Sukshma Bhuta) came from Tamasic Ahamkara. Ahamkara is both sentient and insentient.

"Impelled by Me all these principles united together to form the Egg which was an excellent abode for Me. I dwelt in that Egg which was floating in water. From My navel grew the lotus called the universe. The self-born Brahma, manifested in that lotus.

"Strengthened by Tapas (knowledge) with the help of Rajas, and through My grace he, the Master of the universe, the universal soul created the three worlds Bhur, Bhuvah and Suvah with their protectors (Lokapalas).

"The Suvah (heaven) became the abode of the gods; the Bhuvah (Antariksha) of the Bhutas; Bhur (earth) of men and the spheres beyond the Suvah of the Siddhas; the spheres below the earth of the Asuras and Nagas. Actions characterised by the three Gunas lead to the three worlds, viz. Bhur, Bhuvah and Suvah. Mahar, Jana, Tapas are attained by Yoga, Tapas and renunciation. My abode, Vaikuntha which is beyond the seven Lokas is attained by Bhakti Yoga.

"By Me who am Time and the dispenser of all Karmas, this world with its diverse Karmas rises and sinks in this stream of the Gunas, i.e. one is led to higher life in regions up to Brahmaloka or to lower life down to plants or clod of earth.

"The smallest or the highest, thinnest or the stoutest thing that is seen to exist is all made up of the two principles, Prakriti and Purusha.

"That from which a thing takes its origin and into which it dissolves exists also in the middle. That alone is real. That which is the beginning and at the end of a thing is also in the

middle. Whatever is the beginning of anything or its end, is also its middle and thus it is the real existence, but the modifications have a mere relative or empirical existence like the ornaments of gold and earthen ware.

"That is only real which gives rise to the original transformation which is at the beginning and at the end. Brahman is the only Absolute Reality which is never subject to modifications. The effect has a beginning and an end. All effects depend upon Brahman for their subsistence as effects.

"Prakriti which is the material cause of this universe, Purusha which pervades the Prakriti, which is its substratum or support and Time which causes disturbance in the Gunas and brings its manifestation—all these three am I, the Brahman.

"The creative process flows on in due order of father and son without a break for the experience of the Jiva. It lasts so long as the period of preservation continues according to the will of the Lord.

"Then, the universe which pervaded by Me, the place of the births and deaths of various creatures, becomes fit for dissolution into the five Bhutas. The order is reversed in Pralaya. The modifications are dissolved in the Tattvas or principles from which they proceeded.

"Thus the body merges into the food, food into seeds, seeds into earth and earth into smell; smell into water, water into taste, taste into fire, fire into form or colour; colour into air, air into touch, touch into ether; ether into sound.

"The organs merge into their causes, the gods (Adhidaivas); the gods into the mind which rules over all and the mind into Sattvika Ahamkara. Sound is withdrawn into Tamasic Ahamkara, and that powerful Ahamkara into Mahat; Mahat into the Gunas; the Gunas into the unmanifested Prakriti and Prakriti into Time (Kaala).

"Time merges into Jiva, Jiva into Me, the birthless Atman. Atman is absolute and remains by Himself who is indicated by

the creation and destruction of the universe and who is their substratum.

"When these processes are meditated on, how can delusion implying difference rise in that mind or even if it arises, how could it stay in that mind which reflects in this way, just as darkness cannot stay on rise of the sun in the sky?

"Here, I have thus explained to you the Sankhya system of philosophy in both ways, i.e. the order of evolution (creation) and involution (dissolution or Pralaya), which cuts off the knot of doubt. I have explained to you in detail how the forces of nature work for creation and how they work back again for Pralaya or destruction. I am the witness of all things great and small."

SATTVA, RAJAS AND TAMAS

The Lord said: "O best of men, I will now explain to you the effect of the three Gunas separately in detail. Listen to it attentively.

"Sama (control of the mind), Dama (control of the senses), forbearance, discrimination, Tapas, truthfulness, compassion, memory, contentment, renunciation, absence of greed, faith, shame or shrinking from what is unrighteous, charitableness, etc. (straightforwardness, modesty, respectfulness) and taking delight in the Self are the attributes proper of Sattva.

"Desire, activity, pride, craving (greed), arrogance praying for comforts, idea of separateness, material enjoyment, excitement on account of pride, love of fame, affection, fun, power, violence and striving hard are the attributes proper of Rajas.

"Anger, greed, untruthfulness, cruelty, begging, hypocrisy, fatigue, quarrel, grief, delusion, dejection, distress, sleep, hope, fear and indolence are the attributes proper of Tamas.

"Now listen to the effects of their combination. O Uddhava, the sense of 'I-ness', 'I am', 'My-ness', 'It is mine', etc. is produced by the mixture of the three Gunas. All our

dealings or transactions through the mind, objects, senses and Pranas are the effects of a mixture of the three Gunas. (You identify with the body and organs and say, "I am black, I am lean, I am blind." You identify with objects and say, "This coat is mine, etc.")

"Devotion to the performance of one's duty (Sattvic), acquisition of wealth (Tamasic) and satisfaction of his desires (Rajasic) which bear the fruits of faith (Sattvic), attachment (Rajasic) and wealth (Tamasic) are the results of a mixture of the Gunas.

"If a man intensely gives his mind to Pravritti course and if he leads the life of a householder observing his duties laid down for him, this is a case of a mixture of the Gunas. Man is Sattvic when he has got the Sattvic attributes such as Sama (serenity), etc. he is Rajasic if he has desire and other qualities and he is Tamasic if he has anger and other qualities.

"When a man or a woman worships Me with devotion and does duties without any selfish motive, they should be known as possessed of Sattvic nature.

"When they worship Me for the attainment of desires, for the sake of wealth and blessings, they should be known as possessed of Rajasic nature; and if they worship Me in order to do injury to others, they are of Tamasic nature.

"The Gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas effect only the Jiva but not Me. They manifest themselves in mind and bind him to Samsara by attaching him to the sense-objects.

"When Sattva prevails over the other two Gunas man has happiness, virtue, knowledge and the like. When Rajas which leads to attachment, differentiation and activity overpowers Sattva and Tamas, the person gets pain, becomes active and seeks after fame and wealth. When Tamas which produces infatuation, ignorance and dullness overwhelms Sattva and Rajas, then he experiences sorrow, stupor, sleep and becomes cruel and voracious.

"When the mind becomes serene and cheerful, when the

senses are subjugated, when the body is free from fear, when the mind is free from attachment, Sattva grows up and makes it easy to realise Me.

"When the mind is distracted by actions, when desires multiply, when the senses become restless, when the mind is always wandering, know by these signs that Rajas is increasing.

"When the mind cannot grasp, when it is drooping, when it is not able to reflect on the Atman, when it languishes, when the mind is vacant, when ignorance and dejection prevail—known by these signs that Tamas is increasing.

"When Sattva increases the strength of the gods is enhanced, when Rajas increases the Asuras prevail; when there is an increase of Tamas the Rakshasas prevail.

"Wakefulness is due to Sattva, dreams to Rajas and deep sleep to Tamas. The fourth or the superconscious state is Atman that is connected with all the three states.

"By the force of Sattva Brahmanas, i.e. those who follow the courses laid down in the Vedas go higher and higher upto Brahmaloka; through Tamas men sink lower and lower and through Rajas they remain in the middle, i.e. in the sphere of man.

"If at the time of dissolution of the body, the mind is full of Sattva, man attains heaven; if full of Rajas he is born again as a mortal in this world; if it is full of Tamas he goes to hell. But those who are above the three Gunas attain to Me alone. Action that is offered to Me or that is unselfish is Sattvic; action done with expectation of fruits is Rajasic; that action which becomes harmful or is hypocritical is Tamasic.

"The knowledge of the existence of Atman as something distinct from the body is Sattvic; that which is otherwise, i.e. identifies Atman with the body, etc. is Rajasic; the knowledge of the uncultured like that of children, the dumb, etc. is Tamasic, that which concerns Me is Jnana which is beyond the Gunas.

"The forest is a Sattvic dwelling; a village is Rajasic; the gambling house is Tamasic, and My abode is beyond the Gunas.

"He who performs his duties with no attachment is Sattvic; he who is blinded by attachment is Rajasic; he who has lost the understanding or right and wrong is Tamasic; he who has taken refuge in Me is an agent free from all Gunas.

"Faith in Paramatman as taught in the Vedanta Sastra is Sattvic; that in sacrificial and other Vedic duties is Rajasic; faith in Adharma or irreligion is Tamasic; Absolute faith in My service is beyond the Gunas.

"That food which is healthy, wholesome, pure and obtained without efforts is considered Sattvic; that which gratifies the senses or the palate is Rajasic; that which is impure and injurious to health is Tamasic.

"Happiness which arises from his own Self is Sattva; that which arises from the objects of sense is Rajas: that which arises from ignorance and delusion is Tamas; and that which arises from realising Me is beyond the Gunas.

"Substance, place, the fruit (Svarga and the like), time, knowledge, action, agent, faith, state form, goal—all these are affected by the three Gunas.

"O bull among men, all things that are pervaded and regulated by Purusha and Prakriti, as also whatever is seen, heard or thought by the intellect are the products of the Gunas.

"O gentle one, these are the courses of Samsara (births and deaths) for the man. They are caused by the Gunas and his Karma. He who has conquered these Gunas which arises in his mind, and who is attached to Me by means of devotion becomes fit to attain Moksha or enter into Me.

"Therefore let wise men, having obtained this body which is the means of attaining Jnana (knowledge) and Vijnana (Self-realisation), shake off their attachment to the Gunas and worship Me.

"The wise should worship Me with alertness, with control over his senses, and without attachment to anything else. He should conquer Rajas and Tamas by developing Sattva and should overcome Sattva also by means of desirelessness and by

concentrating the mind on Me. By such means he goes beyond the Gunas, abandons his body and attains to Me.

"Such a man, released from the body and from the Gunas which arise in his mind, being full of Myself, the Para Brahman, shall not do anything external or internal, i.e. leading to Samsara or Moksha. He will have nothing to do with the objects of sense either external, through actual contract or internal through thought."

AILA GITA

The Lord said: "He who having obtained this human body through which My nature may be realised, performs the righteous duties and worships Me, realises Me, the All-bliss Paramatman present in himself.

"Freed by firm knowledge from the indulgence of Gunas, which brings on the limitation of Jivahood, a man is not attached to the unreal objects, though he may live in their midst in the phenomenal universe which is only an illusion or mere appearance depending on Maya.

"One should not keep company with the wicked and unworthy who seek to satisfy their low appetites. He who follows any one of them falls into the abyss of darkness, like the blind following the blind.

"The highly renowned emperor Pururavas (Aila) was overcome with grief and despair on account of his separation from Urvasi whom he passionately loved. When he got over the sorrow, he developed dispassion and renunciation and sang the following song out of sheer disgust for his past disgraceful life.

"Finding that Urvasi had suddenly left him alone at dead of night, he wept aloud and followed her naked crying, 'O wife, my beloved, O cruel one, stop, stop, do not run away.'

"Though Urvasi lived with him for many years, his desire was not satisfied. His mind was so much allured by Urvasi that he was not aware of the passing of the days, nights, and years.

"Aila (Pururavas) said: 'Alas, Oh! the extent of my delusion, my understanding was clouded by lust!

" 'When my neck was embraced by her, I never noticed these portions of my lifetime passing away.

" 'Deceived by her, I never knew when the sun rose and when it set. Alas, countless days and long periods of years passed in this way.

" 'Oh, most deplorable is my delusion, which made an emperor, the jewel of all kings an animal of sport for a woman!

" 'I ran after a woman who left me, stark naked weeping bitterly, an emperor with all grandeur and wealth, as if I was a mere straw.

" 'What greatness or power or strength of mind or lordship could there be in me who like an ass kicked by a she-ass, followed her as she was deserting me?

" 'Of what worth is learning, Tapas, renunciation, study of Vedas, solitude and silence to one whose heart is stolen away completely by women?

" 'Vain has been my boast of learning. Fie upon me, a fool. I was not sensible of my own welfare. I was self-conceited and so thought that I was a very wise man. Though I am an emperor I was subdued by a woman, like a bull or a donkey.

" 'Though I have for years tasted the nectar of Urvasi's lips, my desires never got quenched but increased like the fire kindled by oblations of ghee.

" 'Who else could possibly be powerful enough to make the mind pure and free when it gets entangled by sex desire, when it is carried away by a courtesan, than the glorious Adhokshaja, the Omnipotent Lord of those who find delight in Atman.

" 'Though the gracious lady (Urvasi) tried to wean me from my passion by verses from the sacred literature, the delusion of my mind continued in full force, because of my wicked nature and inability to conquer my desires.

" 'The lady is in no way to be blamed. She has not done me any harm. I had no control over the senses. I am only to be blamed. What harm is done by the rope to one, who ignorant of its true nature, mistakes it for a serpent?

" 'Great is the power of delusion of nature. The body which is so very unclean, full of bad odours and decaying flesh, etc. becomes the centre of attraction and affection as if the fragrance of flowers or beauty of other objects exist in it, on account of ignorance. The superimposition is simply due to Avidya or ignorance. Beauty, fragrance, etc. are projected in the body on account of ignorance.

" 'Is this body the property of the parents, or the wife, or the master, or fire, or dogs and kites, or one's self, or the relatives? This is not easy to decide. To that abominable body which resolve into refuse, worms, ashes and dust people get attached saying, 'Oh how beautiful is a woman's face, with charming nose and sweet smile!'

" 'What difference is there between those men who delight in the accumulation of skin, flesh, blood, tendon, fat, muscles, marrow, bones, excreta, urine and various other filthy things—and the worms?

" 'The man of discrimination should not associate with women or those who are fond of women, because the mind is agitated only by the contact of the senses with their objects and not otherwise.

" 'No passion arises for anything that has not been seen or heard. Therefore the mind of a man who controls his senses gets steady and tranquil. It becomes calm and fit for concentration on the Lord.

" 'Therefore no association through the senses should be made with women or with those who run after women, because the passions cannot be trusted even by men of wisdom. What then needs be said of those like me (full of strength, wealth, position, passion and egoism)?'

"Thus singing, Pururavas the King of kings left the region

of Urvasi, shook off the delusion through knowledge, realised Me and attained the bliss of Self-realisation.

"Therefore the wise man should avoid bad company and associate himself with the righteous and the wise. Their company would make him unattached and purge his mind of all desires.

"The wise desire nothing. They are independent and do not accept any gifts. They devote their mind to Me, have a calm mind and see Me equally everywhere. They are free from the notions of 'I' and 'Mine' and are beyond the pairs of opposites. They are free from attachments of any kind.

"O blessed one, they constantly talk of Me and those who listen to talks or stories about Me are absolved from their sins.

"Those who listen to talks or stories about Me with sincerity, reverence and faith in their efficacy, sing them and are delighted in them become attached to Me, attain faith and devotion to Me.

"For one who has attained devotion to Me, the Brahman of infinite, excellent qualities, perfect in every respect and the embodiment of knowledge and bliss, is there any other thing yet to attain?

"Just as cold, fear and darkness leave a man who resorts to the blessed fire, so also ignorance, fear of death and all evils run away from a man who associates, worships and lives with the wise.

"The wise who have realised Brahman are the supreme resort for those who rise and fall (take higher and lower births) are being tossed about and drowned in the fearful ocean of Samsara (i.e. births and deaths) like a strong boat to those who are about to be drowned in water.

"Just as food is the life of beings, so I am the shelter to the afflicted. Just as Dharma (righteousness) is wealth to men in the other world, so the wise are the shelters of those who are afraid of Samsara, i.e. births and deaths.

"The sun having risen bestows only one external eye on people but the wise bestow on them many eyes (internal), i.e. many ways of attaining knowledge. The wise are the veritable gods and true friends. They are Myself, the Atman."

KRIYA YOGA AND IDOL-WORSHIP

Uddhava said: "O Lord, protector of the devotees, O Lord of Satvatas, pray explain to me the mode of worshipping Thee through ceremonials—in what manner and through what means the devotees worship Thee?

"Sages like Narada, the glorious Vyasa and Acharya Brihaspati, the son of Angiras say that this course is specially efficacious for men for the attainment of liberation.

"O Lord who protects Thy devotees, that instruction, which, after it had flowed from Thy lotus-like lips, the worshipful Brahma taught to his sons, Bhrigu and others, and the Lord Siva to his consort Parvati, that indeed I consider as the best and the most suitable means of well-being for all castes and orders of life, even for women and Sudras also.

"O Lotus-eyed one, O Lord of the lords of the universe, tell me who is devoted and attached to Thee, about this means that unties the bonds of Karma."

The Lord said: "O Uddhava, the methods of ceremonial worship given in the sacred books and adopted by my devotees are infinite and various. So I shall describe it briefly and regularly from the beginning.

"The method of worshipping Me is threefold, viz. Vedic, Tantric and mixed. One may worship Me by any one of the three methods according to his desire and taste.

"How, on being initiated as the twice-born according to the rules laid down for him, a person ought to worship Me with devotion and faith, do thou learn it of Me.

"In an image, or the sacrificial ground or in fire or in the sun, in water or in his own heart, or in a Brahmin he should

worship Me, his preceptor with sincerity and devotion and with the necessary articles.

"He should clean his teeth, face, and limbs and then bathe for the purification of his body. Bathing should be done with both Mantras, Vedic and Tantric by washing himself with earth and other things.

"The Sandhya morning worship, noon and evening prayers as ordained by the Sastras should be performed. They should not be abandoned because of My worship. Then the devotee should begin My worship along with them which lifts him up from the sphere of Karma, with the resolve that he does such worship for attaining My grace and not for any other desire. He should perform My worship with the purest purpose, with all thoughts directed to Me.

"The images are of eight kinds—those made of stone, wood (sandal, etc.), metal (gold, silver, copper, etc.) or their mixture in fixed proportion, clay, sand, picture (in cloth), jewels (crystal) mental (image formed in the mind).

"In temples my images are of two kinds—movable and immovable. The movable are taken around for festivals while the immovables are fixed. In images set up for worship in temples, the Mantras for invoking Me (Avahana) in the image and releasing (Udvasa) Me therefrom, need not be repeated.

"In the case of the movable image there is an option, but in the case of the sacrificial ground, etc. they are compulsory.

"The necessary acts of worship vary according to the image set up for worship. In ordinary images I should be invoked and released at every time of worship while in fixed images and Saligramas it is unnecessary to do so. Clay images and pictures ought not to be washed while others should be washed. In the former ones sprinkling or wiping is admissible.

"The worship of the images should be performed with worthy and excellent articles that are available. A sincere devotee may worship Me in the heart with whatever he can get or even merely by mental offerings.

"O Uddhava, in images, bathing and decoration are dearest to Me; in the sacrificial ground the contemplation of Tattvas or the location of the deities, and in fire, offerings soaked in ghee. In the sun, worship with prayers and Arghya or water at the proper period is dearest to Me; in water, with water and flowers, etc. Even water offered to Me by a devotee with faith is most pleasing to Me—what needs then be said of the offerings like sandal, flowers, light, perfume, incense and various kinds of food. But abundant offerings from one who is not devoted to Me cannot please Me and secure My grace.

"The devotee should take bath and collect first all the articles of worship. He should not get up in the midst of worship to get things. He should sit on Kusa grass facing East or North and then worship Me. If it is an image he should face the image.

"Having located the deities in the several members of his own body and also in the respective parts of the image, he should touch the image with his hand and clean it removing the flowers and other things offered on the previous day. He should duly purify the Kalasa or vessel filled with pure water for sprinkling.

"He should sprinkle that water on the place of worship, on the articles of worship and on himself and also three vessels and put in the three vessels some of that water, and the several articles of worship.

"The worshipper should for the purpose of Padya Arghya and Achamana pronounce over the three vessels the Mantras called 'Namah' to the heart, 'Svaha' to the head and 'Vashat' to the Sikha or locks on the crown of the head and all with the Gayatri.

"Then in his own body purified by Vayu and Agni he should meditate on the subtle and supreme form of Paramatman seated in the lotus of the heart which is contemplated by Siddhas at the end of the Nada.

"Having worshipped Me in his own body pervaded by that subtle essence which is contemplated as Atman and being full

of that presence, he should invoke My presence in the image and perform Nyasa (location of the deities in its different parts) and worship Me.

"Let him construct mentally a seat for Me with Dharma and other deities for its various parts attended by the Saktis and on the seat a lotus of eight petals with effulgent pericarp and filaments, and according to the rules both of the Tantra and the Veda, offer Padya, Achamana, fruits, flowers and the like (fanning, etc.) for the attainment of prosperity and the final beatitude.

"He should next worship My weapons—the Chakra, the disc Sudarsana, the conch Panchajanya, the club Gada, the sword, the bow and arrows, the plough and the pestle, and also the ornaments, the jewel Kaustubha, the garland (Vanamala) and the mark Srivatsa on the chest.

"Nanda, Sunanda, Garuda, Prachanda, Chanda, Mahabala, Bala, Kumuda, Vishvaksena, the preceptors and the gods—these attendants and others also he should worship with sprinkling of water and other processes in their respective places, facing Me.

"If there be sufficient wealth, images should be daily bathed with water made fragrant with sandal, Useera, camphor, saffron, Aguru, Agallochum with such Mantras as the Svarna-gharma hymn (Rig Veda passages), the stanza called Maha-purusha Vidya, Purusha Sukta and the Samans called Neerayana and so on.

"With clothes, sacred thread, ornaments, garlands of leaves, garland of flowers, scent, unguents, sandal figments, My devotee should adorn Me with propriety and intense love.

"The worshipper should offer Me with faith and sincerity Achamana, Padya (water for washing the feet and mouth), scent, sandal, flowers. Akshatas, incense, light and presents of fine articles.

"If one has the means, sweet cooked rice, or rice which is boiled with milk, specially prepared articles of food with ghee,

different kinds of flour cakes and sweets, curd, vegetables, dhall, ghee, butter, puddings of wheat flour, etc. should be offered to Me.

"My image may be washed with milk, oil and other ointments. The devotee may clean My feet, teeth, etc. He may adorn the altar with mirrors. He may prepare various kinds of food for Me, give Me treats of music and dancing or singing on special days like fullmoon, newmoon, Ekadasi, etc.

"In a pit dug in the earth made according to the rules with a girdle, cavity, platform and altar, he should place fire and when it is well-kindled, he should collect it with his own hand.

"Having, according to rules, placed the sacred grass (Kusa) round it and sprinkled water on all the four sides, having performed a process called Anavadhana, i.e. placing the sacred fuel and other things and placed to the north of fire, the articles to be offered and sprinkled, then with a spoon of water from the consecrated vessel, he should meditate on Me in the fire.

"He should contemplate Me as brilliant as melting gold, armed with a conch, a disc, a club and a lotus, having a happy and delightful countenance, wearing a cloth of the colour of lotus stamens and adorned with a brilliant crown, bracelets, waistband and beautiful armlets, with Srivatsa mark on the chest and radiant Kaustubha gem, and wearing a garland of wild flowers (Vanamala). After meditating and worshipping Me he should put fuel soaked in ghee into the fire and perform the two Agharas, i.e. pouring of ghee in the fire uttering 'Prajapataye Svaha', etc. and also other offerings soaked in ghee uttering 'Agnaye Svaha' etc. He should pour the offerings into the fire with the Moola Mantra 'OM NAMO NARAYANAYA' and portions of the offering with the sixteen verses. He should pour daily offerings also to Dharma and other deities and then 'Svishtakrit' offering to Agni.

"Having finished the worship he should prostrate himself before the image. Then he should worship the attendant deities

with the offerings and repeat the Mula Mantra contemplating the perfect Brahman who is Narayana.

"He should give Me Achamana after offerings and give the remnant of such offerings to Vishvaksena. Then he should offer Me spices, betel leaves and again worship Me.

"He should sing songs of praise, describe My qualities, dance and act My deeds, and listening to and telling My stories he should remain in that blissful state for some time.

"He should praise Me with various songs and hymns found in the Vedas, Puranas, or composed in the common language of the people, and prostrate himself before Me, saying, 'O Lord, O Lord! Have mercy on me. Be gracious unto me.'

"Having placed his head on My feet and holding them with both his hands (the right foot with the right hand, the left foot with the left hand) he should say, 'O Lord, protect me from the ocean of Samsara with the shark of Death in it, of which I am terribly afraid. I have taken shelter in Thee'

"Having thus worshipped Me, and devoutly placed on his head some of the flowers and other things offered to Me, he should remove My invocation from the image when such rite is necessary by merging the light that was invoked in the image back in the supreme light in his heart.

"The devotee may worship Me in any image in which he may have faith at any particular time, in the manner that appeals most to his mind and inclination, because I am immanent in all things, I am the Self of all, and I am present in all beings, as well as in one's own Self.

"The man who worships Me thus by means of ceremonials, Vaidika as well as Tantrika, obtains from Me his desired attainments both here and hereafter.

"Having installed My image, he must have a strong temple built for it with beautiful flower gardens attached. He should make a gift of lands, shops, cities and villages for the continuance of the daily worship and for processions and

festivals on special days. By doing so, he attains My powers and that state in which he enjoys the Lordly blessings like Myself.

"Man attains to the position of all emperor by installing Me. He attains the three worlds by constructing a temple for It. He attains Brahmaloka by worship. He attains to a state of equality with Me by all the three.

"He who worships Me with disinterested devotion directly attains Me. He who worships Me in this manner develops perfect devotion towards Me.

"He who deprives the deities or Brahmins of the endowments made to them by himself or by others is born as a worm in dirt and is certain to live a worm for a million years.

"Whatever fate awaits this culprit in the next life awaits also his helper, instigator, director or abettor because they are sharers in the act. The punishment is greater in proportion to the degree of the sin.

"Whatever attainment awaits the worker (in the acts of worship, building temples, etc.), awaits also his helper, his director and him who gladly appreciates him, because they all do their part and in the other world, every one's share in the fruits being as large as his contribution here."

JNANA YOGA

The Lord said: "Seeing that the whole universe is comprised of one Paramatman, is pervaded by the same Prakriti and the same Purusha and is one with Purusha and Prakriti, one should neither praise nor condemn other's natures and actions.

"Whoever censures or praises the natures and acts of others will begin to think that the world is real and will fall from his purpose of attaining wisdom. He will thus soon get lost. The mind is directed to a false channel and it deviates from the right path.

"When the senses, the product of Rajasic Ahamkara are overpowered by sleep, the Jiva loses his external consciousness and experiences illusive dreams or death-like sleep. Similarly

does the man who perceives differences between objects and beholds plurality. They do not realise the eternal Atman within because of the mind's delusion.

"In duality what is unreal, what is good or what is bad and to which extent? To one who has realised the Self and beholds the one Atman everywhere, what is there good and bad or real in this world? Whatever is uttered by the tongue and conceived by the mind is unreal.

"Even unreal things like reflections, echoes, illusory appearances like snake in the rope, etc. produce some effect. Even so the body and other things produce fear till death or till they are dissolved in Prakriti.

"The Lord, the Atman, projects this universe and is projected; maintains it and is maintained; dissolves it and is dissolved. Brahman only appears as the world, just as the rope appears as the snake.

"There is nothing real beyond the Atman or Brahman. The threefold appearance in the Atman (Adhyatmika, Adhibhautika and Adhidaivika) is proved to be without foundation. Therefore know the threefold division consisting of the three Gunas to be the effect of Maya. All the varied phenomena of nature are created by Maya and the three Gunas.

"He who has attained knowledge (Jnana) and Self-realisation (Vijnana) that I have declared, neither praises nor censures anybody. He moves in the world like the sun (which shines alike on the water of the Ganga as well as on dirty gutter waters, on the palace and the cottage alike) making no difference betweeen things.

"Knowing by means of direct perception, inference, reasoning, scriptural teachings and one's own Self-realisation that whichever has a beginning and an end is unreal, one should wander in the world free from attachment."

Uddhava said "O Lord, now the Samsara or relative existence does not indeed belong to Atman, the self-luminous

seer, or to the body (non-self), the seen. To whom then does it belong?

"The Atman is changeless, destitute of Gunas, pure, self-luminous, unobserved by anything and like fire which illumines or shapes molten matter, whereas the body is non-intelligent. So, which of these could be subject to Samsara? The one is the operator or mechanic and the other is the instrument. The chain of births and deaths cannot attach to either. How then does it arise?"

The Lord said: "So long as there is contact between Atman and the body, the senses and the Pranas, the Samsara is real to one who has no discrimination. So long as the organs of sense and action draw the mind outwards, till then, the chain of births and deaths must continue as the result of delusion and ignorance.

"Though the world is unreal, yet the Samsara does not vanish to him who is thinking of the objects, like evil experiences in dreams.

"The dream brings troubles only to a sleeping man, but it no more deludes one who is wide awake. Similarly ignorance creates delusion and the chain of births and deaths to a man. When one attains knowledge or Self-realisation he is free and such delusion vanishes.

"Grief, joy, fear, anger, covetousness, delusion, desire, as well as birth and death are seen in relation to Ahamkara but not to Atman.

"Man is attached to the body and identifies himself with body, organs, the Pranas and the mind. He abides in them and becomes the Jiva. He puts on a form made up of Gunas and Karma (tendencies and activities) and runs about in Samsara under the sway of Kaala or Isvara, known by various names such as Sutra, Mahat, etc.

"The sage cuts off by means of meditation and the sword of knowledge obtained from the preceptor and sharpened by service to the preceptor, this baseless Ahamkara which is

imbedded in mind, speech, Pranas and body and wanders in this world free from attachment.

"Knowledge is the discrimination by means of the Vedas and Sastras, Tapas (performance of one's own duties), direct perception or realisation, tradition, precept and inference, that whatever absolute thing exists in the beginning and also at the end of this universe is the thing that exists in the middle also and that alone is Kaala, the giver of light and the cause.

"Just as gold is the only reality in the various ornaments when they retain a name and form, as well as before they are made into such ornaments or after their form is destroyed, so also am I at the beginning, at the end and in the middle of the universe.

"Brahman is Vijnana (wisdom) untouched by defects. The three states, the three Gunas appearing as the cause, effect and doer make the universe. The fourth (Turiya) which transcends the three states is alone real. The actor in the three states, viz. waking, dream and deep sleep is the same. He cannot dream while awake. When one state of activity is present the other states are absent. By argument and inference you will know that Brahman alone is real for all time.

"What does not exist before or after, has no existence in the middle also. It is a mere name. That alone by which anything is produced or made manifest, may be said to exist. This is My opinion. Whatever has a name and form or comes within the cognisance of the mind must necessarily be unreal. The whole world of modification which was originally non-existent is the creation of Rajo Guna. It is a projection of Brahman. It appears on account of Brahman. But Brahman is self-existent and self-luminous. It throws light on other things. It is Brahman that appears in wonderful modifications as the senses, their objects, the subtle elements, the mind, the gross elements and also the deities presiding over them.

"Clearing up all doubts about the Atman by discrimination, by means of Vedas and Tapas and negation of all

illusory names and forms, the sage should be fixed in the bliss of Atman having abstained from all sensual pleasures.

"The body is not the Atman because it is material. Also the organs, the gods, the Pranas, the air, water, fire, ether, earth, objects of the senses, the mind, the intellect, the Chitta, the Ahamkara and Prakriti are not the Atman, because they are all matter. These do not affect the sage.

"For one who has realised My nature, what benefit is there to be derived by controlling the organs which are constituted of the Gunas? Or what loss comes to him whose senses are outgoing? Whether the clouds gather or disperse, what is that to the Sun?

"Just as the sky (Akasa) is not affected by the attributes of air, fire, water and earth or by those of the seasons, so also the Immutable which is beyond egoism is not affected by the impurities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas which lead to births and deaths.

"Still, contact with the objects which are created by Maya should be avoided till attachment which taints the mind is completely cut out by the powerful weapon of intense devotion to Me.

"When the disease is not properly treated, it gives trouble again and again. Similarly, a mind from which desire and Karmas are not completely burnt, troubles the imperfect Yogi who is attached to everything and brings about his fall.

"Those imperfect unsuccessful Yogins who have been led astray by obstacles caused by the gods in the form of men (friends, relatives, disciples, etc.) do again practise Yoga alone in their future life on account of the force of their previous habit, but they do not take to the intensive course of Karma.

"This body does any act or undergoes changes till death impelled by past impressions of work or previous tendencies; but the sage, though he is in the body, is free from desires and thirst for objects as he has realised the essential bliss of the Atman and is not affected by work.

"He who has fixed his mind in the Atman is not conscious of the body whether standing, sitting, walking, lying down, eating food, passing urine, or performing any other natural function such as seeing or touching.

"Even if the sage beholds the external objects, he does not regard them as something real and other than the Atman, because they have already been discarded as unreal through reasoning, inference and discrimination, just as a man on waking from sleep discards the illusory visions of the dream.

"When a man is in bondage, the effects of ignorance such as body, etc. which are wonderfully wrought by the Gunas and Karma, are not perceived distinct from the Atman. When he attains knowledge of the Self or Brahma Jnana, they disappear or dissolve. But the Atman is neither accepted nor discarded.

"Just as the appearance of the sun dispels only from the eyes of men the veil of darkness, but does not create anything new, so also knowledge of Myself destroys the veil of darkness from a man's intellect.

"This Atman is self-luminous, unborn, immeasurable, knowledge absolute, Omniscient, One without a second, indivisible and beyond speech, impelled by whom the speech and the Pranas do their functions.

"The delusion of the mind lasts only so long as there is the notion of difference or duality in the Absolute Atman, because that delusion depends on that Atman.

"When the mind fancies that there is duality the delusion arises. Atman alone really exists. The duality is baseless.

"Those who are conceited as wise men regard the duality perceived through names and forms and consisting of the five elements as irrefutable and as a proved reality, and hold that the Vedantic view is only a matter of mere compliment or glorification. This view is certainly not held by those who know the truth.

"If the body of a Yogin who is not ripe in his Yogic practices, is rendered unfit by disease and other obstacles that

may crop up in the course of the practice, then the following remedies are prescribed.

"He should by Yogic concentration burn up some troubles. He should overcome heat and cold by concentrating on the moon and the sun. He should remove some diseases through postures accompanied by retention of breath. He should remove some others by Tapas, Mantras and medicines.

"He should overcome some evils by meditating, by taking My names, by singing My names and the like and some (such as pride, egoism) through service unto the great masters of Yoga.

"Some try first to keep this body very strong and of undecaying youth by various means and then begin to practise Yoga solely with the object of attaining extraordinary powers. This is not approved by the wise, because such effort is useless, because the body has after all an end like the fruits of a tree.

"If the body of anyone who daily practises Yoga becomes strong and free from diseases, the Yogin should not put faith on these Siddhis and give up his practice.

"He should not still believe that the body would be permanent. He should not attach any value to it. He should abandon that Yoga and devote himself to Me.

"The Yogin who practises this course of Yoga by taking refuge in Me by making Me his all-in-all, and abandons all desires is not overcome by obstacles. He realises the bliss of his own Self."

BHAKTI YOGA

Uddhava said: "I think that the pursuit of this Yoga is extremely difficult for one who has not controlled his mind and organs. O Achyuta! Tell me in a simple way how a man may attain realisation without difficulty.

"Mostly, O Pundarikaksha (lotus-eyed one)! Yogins who try to concentrate their mind are put to immense sufferings in their attempt to control it. They become despondent because of the obstacles and difficulties of the path, or inability to attain

serenity of mind, or failure in controlling the mind or exhaustion in their struggle to control it.

"Therefore, O lotus-eyed one, O Lord, of the Universe, Hamsas (i.e. those who can discriminate the essence from the chaff, who take the essence alone, just as the swan drinks milk alone from a mixture of milk and water) always resort cheerfully to Thy lotus-like feet which shower heavenly bliss. Thy devotees are not overtaken by Thy Maya and are therefore not touched by pride on account of the Yoga practices.

"Those who are proud of Yoga practices are overtaken by Thy Maya. O Achyuta! O friend of all, is it any wonder that Thou placest Thyself in the hands of Thy servants who resort to none else than Thyself for shelter, for Thou as Sri Rama chosest of Thine own accord to make friendship with monkeys and bears, though Thou art the Lord of the universe at whose feet the great Rulers like Brahma, Indra, etc. prostrate themselves with their shining crowns striking against the board under Thy feet. Who that knows what Thou dost to Thy devotees could possibly abandon Thee, the Director of every self, the Self of all, most beloved and Supreme Ruler, the giver of all boons to Thy dependents? Who would accept the pleasures of heaven which would make him forget Thee? Who would resort to any other deity for the sake of worldly prosperity or for the forgetting of Samsara, i.e. liberation? What is it that could not be attained by us who worship the dust of Thy feet? O Lord, the wise whose joys increase when they think of Thy grace, can never even through a long life of Brahma repay their debt of gratitude to Thee, who drivest away all the evils of all beings, being present outside as the Preceptor, and inside as Antaryamin or the Indwelling Ruler and revealest Thyself unto them."

The Lord said: "I will briefly describe to you the path of righteousness by following which diligently one can overcome death and attain immortality. One should do all works for My sake, always remembering Me, devoting his mind and heart to Me, his mind finds delight in My duties.

"He should dwell in the holy places inhabited by the

righteous who are My devotees and also do what My devotees do, whether they are the gods, Asuras or men.

"He should conduct for Me separately or conjointly with others festivals on important days with royal splendours in the shape of music, dances and other splendid arrangements. He should with a pure mind see in all beings and in oneself Me, the Atman who am both inside and out and all-pervading and pure like the Akasa or sky.

"He is regarded a wise man who takes his stand on pure knowledge, regards all beings to be Myself, treats them with respect and perceives Me to be the same in a Brahmin, a Chandala, a thief, one devoted to Brahmins, the sun or a spark of fire, a cruel man or a kind man.

"He who constantly thinks of Me in all men becomes rid of rivalry, hatred, jealousy, reproach for others and egoism.

"Giving no attention to his friends who laugh in ridicule, leaving aside the bodily differences that may cause a feeling of shame, one should prostrate oneself on the ground before every creature down to a Chandala, a cow, an ass or a dog.

"One should worship and contemplate thus in thought, word and deed till he learns to see Me in all beings, till he regards all beings as Myself.

"To him who contemplates Me in the aforesaid manner everything is Brahman by virtue of the knowledge that comes of beholding the Atman in all. Seeing the Brahman all-round, he is free from doubts and abandons all work. He is able to withdraw himself from everything external.

"To regard Me as the one present in all beings, to look upon all beings as Myself in thought, word and deed is, I think, the best of all methods of worship.

"O dear one, whosoever devotes himself to my worship and service without desire or expectation of reward, will never go wrong or lose the benefit of any portion of his service. Not even a little of the labour in My righteous course, even a beginning of it, would be lost. There is not the least chance of

fear in the Bhagavata path. Even what is otherwise fruitless, becomes a Dharma when it is unselfishly offered to Me. So it has been ordained by Me because it is unaffected by Gunas, it is free from desire. It is a law of righteousness that discharge of duty without expectation of reward must lead to good.

"Any trifling activity whatsoever, such as running or crying or lamentations out of fear or sorrow of the like, if it is resigned to Me unselfishly becomes My Dharma.

"This is the wisdom of the discriminating and the highest skill of the intelligent that in this very birth, they through this mortal and unreal body, attain Me, the Immortal and the Real.

"Here I have expounded to you in brief and in detail, in a synthetic and an analytic manner the complete philosophy of Brahman which is not in the easy reach of even the gods. This is the essence of Brahma Vidya.

"I have shown you the road to knowledge clearly as tested by reason and experience. He who knows thus has his doubts dispelled and attains release or Moksha.

"He who studies and understands our discourse, your questions and My answers which contain all the secret teachings of the Vedas, attains the Eternal, Supreme Brahman.

"Whoever explains this discourse clearly to My devotees is sure to attain My grace and merge in Me. He will get clear and full knowledge of Brahman. I shall of My own accord reveal Myself.

"He who daily studies with devotion this highly sacred and purifying exposition and makes Me known to others in the light of wisdom is purified.

"He who listens to this discourse daily with faith and cherishes devotion to Me is not bound by Karma.

"O friend Uddhava, have you well realised Brahman? Have you attained a firm grasp of Brahman? Is your doubt cleared and is the grief that harassed you removed?

"You should not impart this instruction to a hypocrite, to

an atheist, to a rogue, to one who is not inclined to listen to it, to one who has no devotion, who is wicked and who is haughty and deceitful.

"You should teach this only to a person who is free from these defects, who is devoted to the Brahmins, who is righteous and pious, even to the Sudras and women if they are endowed with devotion.

"When this is known, an aspirant has nothing more to know, just as a man who has drunk the exquisitely sweet nectar has no craving for any other drink or food.

"The whole extent of objects or purposes which men gain by means of knowledge, righteous duties, Yoga and ruling power i.e, all the four kinds of purpose (virtue, wealth, desire and liberation) I am Myself to thee.

"When a man abandons all works and surrenders himself to Me, I choose to make him the best of men. Then he attains immortality and becomes fit to become one with Me."

Uddhava said: "O Creator of Brahma, the great darkness of delusion that had overtaken me is completely dispelled in Thy presence. How could cold or darkness or fear affect a person who stands by the side of fire?

"Thou hast, out of compassion, bestowed on me Thy servant, the torch of Supreme Wisdom. Who that is conscious of Thy grace will abandon Thy feet and go to seek shelter under another?

"By Thee, with the weapon of true knowledge of Atman, have been cut off strong cords of affection to Dasarhas, Vrishnis, Andhakas and Satvatas which had been stretched through Thy Maya for the propagation of Thy creation.

"I bow to Thee, O great Yogin, in reverence. Please instruct me who have fallen at Thy feet and have taken sole shelter in Thee alone, how I may attain unfailing and undying devotion to Thy lotus-like feet. Pray, direct me your servant for the future that my mind may always rest in devotion at Your feet."

The Lord said: "Go Uddhava to My hermitage called Badri at My command. Shake off all evils and sins by the very sight of Alakananda, the holy river that sprang from My feet. You will be purified by touching and bathing in it. Clothe thyself in barks. Live on what the forest yields. Get rid of the longing for worldly objects and comforts. Endure all hardships, heat and cold. Be calm and well-behaved. Control thy senses. Fix thy mind on the Atman. Possessed of Jnana (knowledge) and Vijnana (realisation) reflect and realise what thou hast discussed and learnt from Me. Do My duties to Me constantly. Devote thy mind, heart and speech to Me. Then thou wilt transcend the course of the three Gunas and attain Me, the Supreme."

Uddhava was unable in his fondness to part from the Lord. He was overwhelmed with grief. He could not leave Sri Krishna. At last he saluted Him again and again, placed His sandals on his head and started for Badri.

Then having enthroned Him in the recesses of his heart, the great devotee Uddhava reached the Visala (the great Badrikashrama) and having strictly followed the instructions taught by the one Friend of the Universe, attained oneness with the Lord Hari.

He, who with true faith tastes this nectar of wisdom that was directly imparted to the devoted Uddhava by Lord Krishna whose feet are worshipped by the great Yogins, and that is stored in the path of devotion, which is an ocean of bliss, attains release from Samsara and frees the world through his association.

I bow to the First and Perfect Being called Krishna, the Revealer of the Vedas who, like a bee extracted the essence of the Vedas comprising the highest knowledge (Jnana) and realisation (Vijnana) to put an end to the Samsara and fears of life of His devotees, as He had extracted nectar from the ocean and gave that to His devotees and servants to drink.

Part III

THE BHAGAVATA DHARMA

THE BHAGAVATA PATH

On a certain occasion the divine sage Narada visited Vasudeva, father of Sri Krishna. Vasudeva worshipped Narada and said, "O sage, please tell me of those Dharmas or righteous courses (Bhagavata Dharma) which please the Lord, and listening to which faith and practising it sincerely a person can be freed from the never-ending, terrific wheel of births and deaths and attain everlasting bliss."

Narada said: "O best among men, this resolve of yours to know Bhagavata Dharma (righteous action and knowledge) which purifies the whole universe is indeed highly to be praised. This Bhagavata Dharma, whether heard, studied, contemplated, followed or approved or appreciated would at once purify even those who have done the worst crimes. By Thee, the most auspicious and almighty Narayana, whose Name heard or sung brings merit, is today called to my memory.

"I will try to give you an old story of a conversation between the great King of Videhas, Nimi and the nine sages, sons of Rishabha, in answer to your question.

"Svayambhuva Manu had a son Priyavrita. His son was Agnidhra, father of Nabhi. Nabhi's son was Rishabha who was an Amsa of Narayana. He appeared on earth in order to teach the Dharmas leading to Moksha. He had a hundred sons who were all thoroughly versed in the Vedas and Brahma Vidya. The eldest of them was Bharata, a great devotee of the Lord, in honour of whom this land has been named Bharatavarsha. He reigned over the Bharata Khanda for some time and renounced

the kingdom. He did Tapas and worshipped Hari and attained His region at the end of three lives.

"Nine of them became sages skilled in the practice of Brahma Vidya. Their names were Kavi, Hari, Antariksha, Prabuddha, Pippalayana, Avirhotra, Drumila, Chamasa and Karabhajana.

"They realised the universe, both subtle and gross, to be the Lord Himself and to be nothing different from their Self. Possessing the power of going uninterruptedly anywhere at any time, they travelled, desiring nothing, through the various worlds of the Devas, sages, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Nagas, Charanas, Vidyadharas, etc.

"In the course of such travel, they came to the place there the glorious Nimi was performing a great sacrifice in the continent of Bharata.

"King Nimi duly worshipped them and offered them seats and said, 'This human body is not easily attained by men. It would break down in a minute. It is difficult to meet those who are the devotees of Lord Hari. In this Samsara, association with the righteous and the sages even for half a minute is a great treasure to human beings. It therefore behoves me to take advantage of this opportunity and request you to teach me the secret that leads to everlasting good or the final beatitude. If you consider me fit to hear the same, teach me the ways and knowledge of righteousness (Bhagavata Dharma) by which the Lord of the universe would get easily propitiated and even grant Himself to His disciples.' "

KAVI INSTRUCTS

Kavi said: "The worship of the feet of Achyuta leads to everlasting good. The continuous contemplation and service to the lotus-like feet of Achyuta free a man, who is deluded by mistaking the worthless body for the pure Atman, from all fears. It teaches you to feel the consciousness of His Presence everywhere and in all things and attain bliss and freedom. Know perfectly those duties which please the Lord and lead to His

realisation, which were taught by the Lord Himself for the realisation of Atman even to men of no learning. In following the path of Bhagavata Dharma one is not overcome by obstacles as in the path of Yoga. He may run along this path even with closed eyes without fear of losing his steps, without knowing where he goes and what he does. He will not fall again into the dark abyss of Samsara. A devotee who has attained the grace of the Lord never comes to grief.

"Whatever a man does by his physical organs, tongue, mind and other senses, by intellect or himself, by the instincts of Nature or Prakriti, he should resign everything as service to the Supreme Narayana. The secret of Bhagavata Dharma is thoroughly to renounce egoism, do everything as the servant of the Lord and trust oneself to His grace entirely. He should renounce the benefit or responsibility of all Karmas to the Lord only. Sincerity and faith in the Lord will enable you to realise His immanence.

"The consciousness of duality or sense of separation is the cause of all fear. The sense of duality makes the Jiva identify himself with the body and other unreal objects, strengthens the feeling of egoism or separation from the Lord, and makes one recede from the Lord and creates a forgetfulness or unconsciousness of one's true Self. This is caused by the Maya of the Lord. The wise man, therefore, should become a true devotee of the Lord and trust himself entirely to the Lord's grace and recognise the Lord as his friend, preceptor and the Lord. He who is removed from Isvara forgets the Lord. Then there is the wrong notion, 'I am the body.' This is caused by the Maya of the Lord. Fear arises from devotion to the second. Therefore a wise man should worship the Lord only with unfailing or undying devotion, knowing his Guru to be one with the Lord and Atman. He should have sincere devotion to his Guru and the Lord.

"Though the world of differences does not really exist, it appears to exist like dreams through the mind of man who thinks of it. Therefore, the wise man should control the mind which by its thoughts gives rise to the existence of the world

and the difference of things. Constantly hearing the various acts of grace (Lilas) done by the Lord in His Avataras, singing aloud His praise and His gracious names, heedless of ridicule or censure, the devotee should live in this world without attachments.

"The devotee who serves the Lord constantly, and develops love to Him by singing the names of his beloved Hari, with his heart completely melting in devotion, laughs, weeps, sings and dances. His mind loses itself in ecstacy and becomes entirely oblivious of all external objects. He walks alone with the Lord and forgets the outside world.

"In the five Bhutas: sky, air, fire, water and earth, in the stars, planets, living animals, cardinal points, the trees, rivers, lakes or seas, and everywhere he sees the body of the Lord Hari and bows to it.

"He who worships the Lord in this way and who has resigned himself to Him, gets devotion, realisation of the Lord (Anubhava) and dispassion at one and the same time, just as by eating, one gets satisfaction (Tushti), Nutrition (Pushti), and relief from hunger, all at one and the same time. The Bhagavata ultimately attains supreme peace or Moksha, the highest state of bliss. He does not bear any ill-will to any creature. He is friendly to all. His mind is ever fixed at the lotus-like feet of the Lord. He is ever pure. He purifies the world with the dust of his feet like the rising sun."

HARI INSTRUCTS

Nimi then asked: "What are the characteristics of a Bhagavata or devotee? What are the signs by which he is known? How does he behave towards others? How does he talk? What does he talk? How does he act? What are all the other characteristics by which he can be distinctly recognised in this world?"

Hari replied: "He is the highest devotee who sees his relation to all beings as being Brahman and all beings in his Self which is essentially Brahman. He who sees the Lord's presence

and image in every created object, animate or inanimate and who sees all created objects as portions of the Lord and himself is the perfect Bhagavata or the foremost one among the votaries of the Lord. He who beholds in all beings the Lord as in his own Self and beholds all beings in the Lord within himself, is the highest devotee.

"He who bears love and respect towards the Lord, friendship towards his dependents and other devotees, kindness towards the ignorant, and indifference towards his enemies and those who abuse the Lord is a middle class devotee.

"He who worships Hari as present only in the image and not in His devotees or other creatures is only a beginner. He who worships the Lord only in the temple but is not tolerant of the devotees of other forms and is not able to recognise the Lord's presence everywhere is an elementary devotee.

"The highest devotee perceives the objects with his senses but does not feel either aversion or pleasure. He perceives this universe as the Maya of Vishnu.

"He is the highest devotee of the Lord who by the strength of his meditation on Hari is not affected by the changes of life, viz. birth, death, hunger, thirst, fear, difficulties that affect the body, the organs, the breath, the mind and intellect. The perfect devotee knows that birth and death pertain to the body which is created by Karma, that hunger and thirst pertain to the Prana, that the mind creates a sense of separateness and egoism thereby causing fear and making the Jiva lose touch with the Lord in himself, that the intellect creates desire, avarice, etc. that the senses create feelings of pleasure and pain. The perfect devotee dissociates himself from the above and always remains immersed in the memory of the Lord and recognises his unity with Him.

"He is the highest devotee in whose heart the seeds of desire and Karma are not found and to whom Vasudeva alone is the sole refuge. As he does the action as a servant of the Lord

without egoism, as his mind ever abides in the Lord, his actions create no Karma and he is liberated from births and deaths.

"He is the favourite of Hari who has no attachment to the body, and claims no superiority by birth and deed, by caste, or order, or race.

"The highest devotion does not know 'mine' and 'thine' either in wealth or in body. He looks upon all beings with equal eyes. His mind is always tranquil.

"He is the highest devotee who will not forget the Lord even for the sake of the wealth of the three worlds and who will not forget even for half a minute or half a second the lotus-like feet of the Lord which are sought after by the gods and others who have not conquered their mind.

"How could any affliction arise in the heart of devotee from which it is all removed by the moon-light of the gem-like finger-nails of the feet of the Lord which measured the universe in three steps? How could there be the heat of the sun when the moon has risen? Just as one never remembers the heat of the sun after the moon has risen and flooded the world with its cool rays, so the devotee who meditates on the lotus-like feet of the Lord, never again remembers the pains of Samsara, his desires having vanished never again to return.

"He is the greatest of all devotees whose heart is tied to the lotus-like feet of Hari by the cords of love and devotion. He is never left by Hari Himself who destroys all his sins even though He is unconsciously remembered by name.

"The name of the Lord, if uttered even unconsciously in pain or distress, by force of habit even, removes all sins. If such is the case, it can easily be understood that he is the highest devotee in whose heart the Lord ever dwells, rooted there by the cord of affection."

ANTARIKSHA INSTRUCTS

(*Power of Maya and worship of the Lord is described*)

The king Nimi asked, "What is then this Maya of the

Supreme Lord which deludes even the most intelligent and those who have gained the light of knowledge? Your words full of the wisdom of the Lord have a soothing and beneficent effect on me, who is scorched up in the fire of Samsara. I can never get tired of hearing the same. I am not satiated by drinking the nectar of your words which describe the glories of Hari, the medicine for that unbearable heat and suffering of this mundane existence."

Antariksha said: "Maya of the Lord is that which causes the creation, preservation and dissolution of this universe. It is through Maya only that the Lord becomes many. It is the cause of Jiva's erroneous idea that the pure Brahman which transcends the three Gunas is endowed with a body and subject to the sway of the Gunas.

"The first and Supreme Person, the Cause of all creation created out of these great Bhutas, all things great and small, so that the Jiva may realise himself to be none but Brahman.

"He then entered the Jivas and made them enjoy the Gunas. He is enthroned behind the mind and acts as the powerhouse from which the Jiva is able to function through the mind and the ten senses. The Lord Himself appears as the mind and the senses.

"The Jiva enjoys the sense objects through the senses illumined by the Antaryamin or Inner Ruler. He becomes attached to the body and objects. He thinks that this body is his own Self and identifies himself with the body. On account of egoism, he gets entangled in the never-ending whirl of births and deaths.

"He does many acts with the object of reaping the reward by means of the Karma Indriyas (organs of action) which have their roots in the acts of previous lives enjoys the fruits of the several Karmas by experiencing pleasure and pain.

"He gets immersed in the tide of Karma and passes through many bodies or lives in consequence of Karma and

undergoes many countless miseries. He is subject to birth and death as long as creation lasts.

"When it is time for the dissolution of the universe, Time which is beginningless and endless withdraws the manifested world of substance and qualities into its cause Maya, or Moola Prakriti, or Avyaktam.

"There will be no rain for a hundred years. The sun with its fierce rays will burn the three worlds. The fire emanating from the mouth of Sankarsana from Patala or the lower region will with the help of the wind, burn everything in all directions.

"Then the clouds will pour down a torrent of rain for over a hundred years, each drop being as big as the trunk of an elephant and the universe will be drowned in water.

"Brahma will merge into the Avyakta Mula Prakriti like the fire when all fuel is consumed.

"Smell which is the property of earth is taken by the air and the earth melts into the water. Liquidity, which is the property of water, is taken away by the air, and water gets absorbed in the fire. Fire is deprived of its colour and it merges into the air. Air is deprived of its property of touch and it merges into the ether. After deprival of its property ether in turn merges in Prakriti. The senses, the mind and intellect with their presiding deities merge into the principle of Ahamkara which in its turn merges in Mahat Tattva.

"This Maya of the Lord is thus the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of the Universe. It consists of three Gunas. I have thus described to you the Maya of the Lord. What more would you like to hear, O king?"

PRABUDDHA INSTRUCTS HOW TO CROSS MAYA

King Nimi asked, "O great sage! Please tell me, how can one whose mind is not controlled, and who is of dull understanding, easily cross over this Maya?"

The sage replied: "If you want to free yourself from misery and attain happiness, see that the man who leads a sensual life

fails to escape from misery and to attain the desired good. One cannot get real lasting happiness from wealth. There is great difficulty in its acquisition. It brings always troubles, afflictions and miseries. There is no happiness in the possession of houses, children, friends and relatives and cattle which are all transient.

"Every man in this world devotes his energies for obtaining pleasure and avoiding pain. But in his endeavour, he always finds pain and toil while the much longed for pleasure is evanescent or illusory. He struggles hard to possess objects for himself, his wife and children; with the objects, his toils and responsibilities increase while the pleasure is only temporary or evanescent.

"The region obtained through Karma is also transient. It is subject to change and destruction. The pleasures of heaven acquired by good deeds in this world, are also similarly temporary and evanescent. The pleasures of heaven are not also unalloyed. Just as kings are afraid or become jealous of other kings more powerful than themselves, so also the Jiva while enjoying the pleasures of his Karma in heaven, becomes jealous of others enjoying equal or greater bliss than himself. He sees others expelled from Heaven at the end of their tenure which creates fear that his stay also might come to a similar end.

"Therefore the wise man who desires supreme bliss of Atman should approach a preceptor who has perfect calmness of mind, who is deeply versed in the Vedas and who has realised Para Brahman.

"He should serve the Guru obediently, attentively, and with sincerity and learn Bhagavata Dharma or duties of a devotee of the Lord from him. He should serve the Guru as his God, which is a sure way of pleasing the Lord of the universe and becoming fit for His grace.

"He should practise non-attachment and keep company with righteous and the wise. He must be kind and compassionate to his inferiors, friendly to his equals and respectful to his superiors.

"He should keep his mind and body pure and regulate his life by fixed rules. He must perform his own duties. He must have forgiveness and should not talk idly. He must study the sacred Vedas. He must observe straightforwardness, celibacy, innocence and equanimity under the opposite conditions of pain and pleasure, gain and loss, etc. He must not do any harm to any being.

"Behold Atman and Isvara everywhere. Perceive the immanence of God in all objects. Free yourself from all connections. Do not bind yourself to your house. Have that which is easily got for your clothing. Have any food that is got by chance. Be content with anything and everything.

"Have faith in the Bhagavata Sastra, but do not blame or condemn any other Sastra. Control your mind, speech and actions. Speak the truth. Be calm. Discipline the senses.

"Hear, recite, sing and meditate on the deeds, qualities and Avataras of Hari. Let all your exertions be for Him only. Offer to the Supreme Lord your sacrificial activities, gifts, Tapas, Japa, virtuous deeds, even your wife, children, house and your very life also.

"Cherish friendly feelings towards the devotees who absolutely depend upon Sri Krishna as their Lord. Worship the Lord as present both in the moving and unmoving objects, in righteous and great men who have attained God-realisation.

"In the company of Bhagavatas, learn how to sing, interchange devotion and love, remind each other and speak to each other of the glory of the Lord, till your hairs stand on end, and sing and dance till you lose yourself in devout contemplation.

"The devotees who have abandoned the world sometimes weep, sometimes laugh, while contemplating on Hari. They talk about Him, sing of Him. Having realised Hari they remain silent and enjoy the bliss of the Lord.

"He who thus trains himself in the duties of Bhagavata Dharma and practises the duties with faith and devotion,

develops devotion and becomes absolutely devoted to the Lord. He easily conquers the Lord's Maya which is otherwise unconquerable."

PIPPALAYANA INSTRUCTS ON THE NATURE OF THE LORD

Raja Nimi said: "Please explain to me the true nature and character of Paramatman, the Perfect Being called Narayana."

Pippalayana said: "Narayana is the cause of creation, preservation and destruction of this universe. He is Himself without a cause. He exists in the three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep and also in other states as Narayana or Brahman the Eternal, or the Highest Truth. He is the powerhouse from which the body, senses, mind, intellect and Prana derive the force for their activities, and animated by Him alone, the body, the senses, the mind and the Prana exist and do their functions. Know Him, O king!

"Neither the mind nor speech, nor the eye nor intellect, nor Prana nor the senses comprehend It, just as the flying sparks from a glowing fire, or the flames cannot understand the fire from which they spring. Even the Vedas which spring from Brahman cannot define Brahman fully and directly. They only teach you to realise Brahman by negative epithets. Though the words are the means of knowing Brahman, though they explain His meaning, they cannot manifest Him at all. They present Him as an inference. This Atman must be admitted as Real Existence, because negative description even is impossible in the absence of real existence.

"Brahman shines as both the subtle cause and gross effect and also as that which is different from them and their cause, because it has diverse powers. Action and cause are manifest as Brahman, because Brahman of great and many powers is the cause of action and cause. The Prakriti or Maya which was one in the beginning before the creation, divided into the three qualities, viz. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. It became Sutra or the thread by the energy of action. It became Mahat by the energy of

understanding. Then it became the Jivatman through Ahamkara. Brahman also shines as deities, the senses, the functions, the objects, pleasure or pain, and others.

"This Brahman never was born and never dies. He neither grows nor decays, because He is the Witness of the various states of all objects which are subject to birth and destruction. He is the Witness and Knower of the different states that affect the bodies, such as birth, growth, modification or change, decay, death, etc. He is the one and the same conscious factor in the stages of childhood, youth, old age, etc. He is an unchanging, undecaying, ever constant, self-luminous, pure consciousness. He exists always and everywhere as the mere indestructible consciousness or knowledge; yet like Prana the one real consciousness is perceived as many under the influence of the senses.

"Life pursues the Jiva through his various relations of wakefulness and dreams, whether in eggs or in the wombs or in the trees or in the drops of sweat. But when the action of the senses and egoism disappear, the Jiva attains his essential Satchidananda state which is free from any change, because his subtle body, the basis for attachment, affections, likes and dislikes does not exist. The only evidence of the existence of Brahman or Atman is the recollection or memory of bliss which you enjoyed in deep sleep when you have risen from sleep.

"When the senses and egoism vanish, the Jiva rests peacefully in the Kutastha Brahman in deep sleep. It is often said that this deep sleep is a vacant state or vacuum or a negative state. This is a mistake. The man who rises from deep sleep invariably says, "I enjoyed sound sleep." This goes to prove that in sound sleep also, there was a factor, Sakshi or silent witness in him, which enjoyed bliss and was ignorant of the cause of such bliss. From this experience of sleep you can understand clearly that the real nature of the Jiva is bliss and that he is unable to realise it, because his mind and senses lead him astray outwardly in a wild goose chase.

"Every feeling of pain is caused by sense of egoism or

separateness from the Lord. This feeling of separateness is an illusion. You should try to conquer this illusion or idea of separateness. When once the feeling of egoism is lost, you will realise the bliss of your essential divine nature.

"When a man destroys the impurities of his mind such as desire, attachment, egoism, etc. caused by qualities and actions (Guna and Karma), by great devotion due to the desire of obtaining the feet of Lord Hari, the true nature of Atman is directly revealed to the clear eyes."

AVIRHOTRA INSTRUCTS ON KARMA YOGA

The King Nimi said: "Please explain to me Karma Yoga by which, being purified, a man can soon free himself from Karma and attain the supreme knowledge of the Self, which is possible only when he withdraws himself from the association from all objects and the course of active duties. Formerly, before my father Ikshvaku, I put this question to Brahma's son Sanaka and others, but they did not answer it. Please tell me the cause of their silence."

Thereupon Avirhotra said: "There are three distinctions in Karma (1) Karma, the performance of necessary acts or duties, (2) Akarma, inaction and (3) Vikarma, wrong action. This division is according to the words of the Vedas. It is not a mere worldly talk. As the Vedas emanate from the Lord, they are mandates that should be implicitly obeyed. They are not like worldly affairs subject to discussion or argument. Even learned men are perplexed with regard to the duties enjoined by the Vedas.

"As Karma is a great secret and a philosophy in itself the sons of Brahman did not give a reply to your question as you were very young and as you could not understand the philosophy of Karma and its secrets.

"The Vedas contain a code of directions for the young. The Vedas mean something different from what the words superficially denote. Just as a father offers his boy some reward in the shape of sweetmeat to induce him to take a doze of bitter

mixture, so also the Vedas offer reward of heaven in order to induce the Jiva towards virtuous action. The various courses of duties are like medicines enjoined upon man for his freedom from the consequences of action.

"That ignorant man who fails to control his senses and neglects to do his prescribed duties which are laid down in the Vedas is led to do evil actions and he repeatedly becomes subject to birth and death on account of impiety for the non-performance of prescribed duties.

"He who actually performs his prescribed duties, which are enjoined upon him by the Vedas without attachment and egoism, and offers his works and fruits to the Supreme Lord, attains to that state or Moksha, in which actions and its effects do not affect him. The promise of fruits in the Vedas is intended to create interest in the actions and to urge man to do actions.

"He who wishes to cut soon the knot of the heart (Hridaya Granthi), which consists of ignorance, egoism, desire and Karma may also, by the aid of Tantric rites, worship the Lord in the ordained methods.

"He should first obtain the grace of his preceptor and follow the mode of worship pointed out by him. Then he should worship the supreme Purusha through any image which he heartily likes and which is most congenial to his mind.

"He should observe the rules of cleanliness and sit facing the idol or the object of worship. He should purify the body by the control of breath and other practices. Thereafter he should adore Sri Hari.

"He should purify the flowers and other articles, the ground, the image and his own Self. He should sprinkle the seat with water and should worship with whichever articles he could get for this purpose.

"He should arrange vessels for keeping water to wash feet and other things. He should perform the preliminary rites of washing the feet, giving water for Achamana. He should meditate on the Lord in the heart with the principal Mantra.

Thereafter he should invoke Him on the image, whom he adored in his mind with concentration.

"He should worship the Lord offering Padya, Arghya, Achamana, ablution, clothes and ornaments. He should offer sandal, flowers, Akshatas, garlands, incense, lights, edibles, etc. He should sing His praises and prostrate himself before Hari.

"He should meditate himself to be one with the Lord and worship the form of Hari. He should take the remnants of the offerings and wear the flowers etc. on his head. He should keep the image in the proper place and finish the worship. In the end, he should contemplate that the Lord is taking rest in His own place.

"He who thus worships Hari, the Paramatman as present in fire, the sun, water and the like, in the guest and in his own heart, soon attains the final liberation and eternal bliss."

DRUMILA, THE SON OF JAYANTI DESCRIBES THE LORD'S AVATARAS

King Nimi said: "O sage! Please describe to me the various past, present and future incarnations (Avataras) of Lord Hari. Please tell me also of those various deeds which in His several Avataras at His own will, Hari did, is doing and will do."

Drumila said: "Whoever wishes to count the endless qualities of the Lord is not prudent. He is a man of childish understanding. Rather it is possible to count in a very long time the particles of dust of the earth, but it is impossible to reckon the excellent attributes of the Omnipotent Lord, the source of endless energies and His deeds.

"The foremost God, Narayana created the egg of the universe called Virat with the five elements created by Himself, and entered it by an Amsa or portion. Then He was called Purusha.

"The three worlds constitute His body. The organs of action and knowledge originate from His organs. He is the

sustaining force that enables the Jnana and Karma Indriyas of all the Jivas to function. He is consciousness by Himself. He is the source of all energy and force. His breath or Prana is the source of the strength and activity of the world. He is the first author of creation, sustenance and destruction of the universe through Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

"In the beginning that first and perfect Purusha became Brahma in association with Rajas for the creation of this universe. He became Vishnu in association with Sattva for its maintenance. Vishnu is the Lord of sacrifice. He is the mainstay of the twice-born and virtue. He became Rudra in association with Tamas for the dissolution of the universe. This is the eternal course of origin, subsistence, and destruction of creatures.

"The Lord incarnated as Nara and Narayana, foremost among sages, having tranquillity of mind. They were born in the womb of Murti, daughter of Daksha and wife of Dharma. The object of the incarnation was to teach by precept and example the performance of duty without desire for reward and to expound the nature of Atman and the knowledge of the Self by which the fetters of Karma are removed. They are still doing penance and are worshipped by the sages of the three worlds.

"Indra was very much afraid when he came to know that Narayana was doing severe austerities at Badrikashrama. He thought that Narayana was aiming to get his exalted position. Indra was not aware of the greatness of the sage Narayana. He sent Cupid with his followers, spring, cool breeze and Apsaras to disturb His penance. The darts of Cupid, the attraction and glances of the celestial women fell on the sage.

"The sage Narayana knew that this was the work of Indra. He smiled and said to Cupid, Vayu and the Apsaras who were trembling with fear, 'There is no cause for any fear here. You are rare guests. You have certainly graced our lonely hermitage. Therefore please accept our hospitality. Make our hermitage worthy of its existence.'

"O King Nimi! When the Lord promised safety and spoke thus, the gods with their heads bent down in shame said to Narayana, 'O Lord! This grace towards us is nothing unusual in Thee, O Lord! Thou art subject to no change. Thy lotus-like feet are worshipped by hosts of sages who take delight in Self-realisation.'

"The gods said: 'Those who worship Thee meet with many obstacles produced by the gods, because they are intent upon going beyond the celestial regions to attain Thy supreme abode.

" 'But the gods do not put any obstacle on those who pour into the fire the offerings which are their shares. When thou chosest to protect Thy devotees, Thou removest all obstacles. Thy devotees are protected by Thy grace and they overcome the various obstacles caused by the Devas.

" 'Some persons who get over the bondage of the ocean like hunger, thirst, heat, cold, the cravings of tongue, touch and the enjoyment of senses, come under the sway of useless anger and are drowned in a pit made by a cow's hoof. They uselessly forsake the merit of their very hard Tapas.'

"While they were thus praising His qualities, the Lord Narayana, created various beautiful, radiant and fully adorned ladies for attending to the comforts of the guests. He wanted to humiliate their pride also.

"The Apsaras, whose beauty has dimmed by contrast to these new creations who were shining like Lakshmi, were lost in bewilderment at their lustre and fragrance. Then the Almighty Lord smilingly said to the humbled deities, 'Choose as an ornament to Svarga one of these who is beautiful like you.'

"The Devas accepted the command, bowed their heads in silence and worshipped the Lord. They chose Urvasi, foremost among the Apsaras and returned to Svarga with her.

"They bowed to Indra and described the superior power of Narayana. All the Devas listened to it. Indra trembled in amazement when he heard this.

"The Lord appeared as a swan and taught Jnana Yoga to

Sanaka and others. He incarnated as Datta and gave instructions to Yadu. Then again He incarnated as Kumara and taught Atma Jnana to Narada. He was born as our father, the glorious Rishaba. He again took an Avatara as Hayagreeva (horse) for the good of the world. He destroyed the demon Madhu Daitya who had stolen the Vedas and recovered them.

"In His incarnation as fish, (Matsyavatara) he protected Manu, Ila, the earth and all herbs from danger. In His incarnation as a boar (Varaha Avatar) He killed Hiranyaksha while he was rising up the earth from the water. In His incarnation as a tortoise (Kurma Avatara), He bore the mountain on His back, when the Devas and Asuras churned the ocean for taking nectar. He released the distressed elephant chief (Gajendra) from the mouth of a crocodile.

"He saved the Rishis (Valakhilyas) when they were in danger of being drowned in the sea. He saved Indra from the sin caused by slaying Vritra, a Brahmin. He released the celestial damsels who had been helplessly shut up in the Asura's house. He again incarnated as the Man-lion (Narasimha Avatara) to kill Hiranyakasipu and release the Devas from captivity.

"For the sake of the gods the Lord killed the great Daityas in the war between them. He protected the worlds by His Avataras during Manvantaras. He assumed the form of a dwarf (Vamana Avatara) and under the pretext of begging, took away this earth from the Daitya King Bali and gave it to the sons of Aditi.

"He incarnated as Parasurama, the fire of the Bhargava race for the destruction of the Haihayas. He extirpated the Kshatriyas twenty-one times. He incarnated as Rama, the Lord of Sita, constructed a dam across the sea and killed the ten-headed Rakshasa king of Lanka named Ravana. The mention of his name is enough to cleanse the world of sin.

"Thereafter He will be born in the race of Yadus for relieving the earth of her burden. He will perform many deeds which even the gods cannot do. He will by his arguments delude

those who, being unworthy of it, perform sacrificial rites. Then in the Kaliyuga, He will slay the Sudra kings.

"O great king of Mighty arms! Countless births and actions of the highly illustrious Narayana have been described."

CHAMASA INSTRUCTS

The king said: "O sages, the foremost among those who have realised Paramatman! What will be the condition of those who do not worship Lord Hari, whose desires are endless and who have no control over their mind and senses?"

Chamasa replied: "The four castes and Ashramas originated from the four parts of the Lord, viz. face, arms, thigh, and leg with their appropriate qualities. They are distinctly divided into Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras according as they are characterised Sattva, Rajas, Tamas or their combinations, by the serenity of mind and other qualities.

"Of these, those who do not through ignorance adore the Lord, the very source of their own creation, or disregard Him, fall from their place and go down to hell.

"Those persons who are far away from hearing the descriptions of Hari and singing His excellent attributes, such as women, Sudras and others are fit to be pitied by sages like yourself. They should be provided with the necessary instructions by kings like you. They also will attain Moksha.

"Although the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas are entitled to approach Hari's feet through birth and the ceremony of wearing sacred thread and study of Vedas, they are deluded by the disquisitions of the Vedas or the promise in the Vedas various fruits of an evanescent nature.

"They have no real knowledge of the course of Karma laid down in the Vedas. They fancy that they are scholars and become conceited. In reality they are thoroughly ignorant. They indulge in vain, silly talks and obstinate discussions over trifles and ceremonials. They are attracted by the honeyed words of Karma Kanda which describes the fruits that are only transient.

"Those who are under the sway of Rajas are cruel. They are passionate and addicted to sensual pleasures. They are revengeful like serpents. They are characterised by hypocrisy and pride. They ridicule the pious who are devoted to Hari.

"They indulge in sexual life. They worship women in their houses. They are attached to women. They speak to one another of their respective well-being. They perform sacrifices without giving food or Guru Dakshina and without following the prescribed rules. They perform sacrifices without understanding their real nature. They kill animals to satisfy their palate and appetite without knowing the consequences thereof.

"Those wicked men are puffed up with the pride of wealth, power, noble birth and false learning, gifts, beauty, strength and ability for action. Being blinded by their pride they despise the Lord and His devotees.

"Those ignorant persons do not pay any attention to the Vedas which bespeak about the glory of the Supreme Lord, who is the Inner Ruler of all beings, and who is like ether present everywhere. They fail to grasp the true spirit of the Vedas and distort the texts to suit their own ends, wishes and fancies and interpret them in their own way in order to serve their purpose.

"To associate with females, to take meat and drink liquor are natural to men. No rule enjoins them to do so. Some check is provided by the Sastras over these tendencies by marriage and sacrifices. To go to a woman in marriage, to slay animals in sacrifice and to drink in the Suragriha ceremony, are sanctioned by scriptures, but to turn them away from these completely which is the real intention of the Sastras. As it is difficult to wean the mind from these all on a sudden, the Sastras say, 'Take flesh in a sacrifice. Drink in the Suragriha ceremony, etc.'

"People do not perceive that the sole, proper use of wealth is to acquire righteousness, and by righteousness, knowledge and tranquillity. They waste their wealth in selfish and sensual desires and do not see that they are at any time within the grasp of death which hovers all around them.

"In particular actions, the smell of wine is sanctioned. The sacrifice of an animal for the adoration of the deities is sanctioned, but not for satisfying the tongue. There is no sanction in the Sastras to take meat. To visit one's wife at the Ritu time for the sake of an issue is sanctioned, but not for pleasure; but people do not understand this pure course of their righteous duties.

"The animals which an ignorant, wicked, haughty, proud and impious man slays for satisfying his palate, devour him in hell.

"They hate Lord Hari who is their own Antaryamin or Inner Ruler and Atman in the other bodies. They are attached to their own bodies and the bodies of their children, and others. Therefore they fall into deepest hell.

"Those who have not attained knowledge of the Self and have full faith in Dharma-Artha-Kama only, who believe that the body and its belongings are permanent, annihilate their own Self.

"They indulge in sensual pleasures. Their desires never get appeased. They kill their own self and consider ignorance as wisdom. In time they get disappointed in their desires. Their objects get frustrated and they become miserable when they become unsuccessful.

"Those people who disregard Vasudeva are snatched away by death in the midst of their desires all on a sudden from their family. They are forced to give up their houses, children, friends and wealth which they accumulated with great pain and trouble. They are reluctantly thrown into the hell of darkness."

KARABHAJANA INSTRUCTS

The king Nimi said: "By what name and form and with what rites is the Lord worshipped in the different Yugas? Please tell me of the same."

Karabhajana said: "O king, in the four ages of Satya (Krita), Treta, Dvapara and Kali, Narayana is worshipped in

diverse ways as having personalities of different hues, names, forms and orders.

"In Satya Yuga the Lord is of white complexion. He has four arms, wears matted locks, bark and deer skin, and the sacred thread and holds Rudraksha, staff and Kamandalu.

"In that age men are tranquil in mind, have no feeling of enmity or hatred. All are friends and equals. They propitiate the Lord by their penance, meditation and control of mind and the senses.

"In this age the Lord is styled as Swan (Hamsa), Suparna, Vaikunta, Dharma, Yogesvara, Amala (pure), Isvara, Purusha, Avyakta (unmanifest) and Paramatman.

"In the Treta age He is blood-red, four armed, has three lines on his forehead and golden locks. The Lord, who is the one purport of the Vedas is an embodiment of the sacrificed. He is worshipped as the Lord of sacrifices. Sruk (chaplet) and Sruva (laddle) are His special marks.

"In that age men adore the Lord Hari who is in the form of all the gods with the help of the Vedas. They observe rigidly the course of righteousness, read and expound the Vedas. They propitiate Him by sacrifices, imagining Him in all Devas. In this age, the Lord Hari is styled as Vishnu, Yajna, Prisnigarbha (the son of Prisni), Sarvadeva Uru Krama, Vrishakapi, Jayanta and Urugaya.

"In the age of Dvapara the Lord is dark-blue, is clad in yellow silk and is marked with His own weapons and distinguished with special marks such as Srivatsa. O king! In that age, being desirous of realising Para Brahman the mortals worship Him as the great king according to the rules of the Vedas and Tantra.

"Salutations unto Thee, the Vasudeva; salutations unto Sankarshana; salutations unto Thee who are the Divine Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Salutations unto Narayana, the Almighty One, the Rishi, the Perfect Purusha, the All-pervading great Atman, the Ruler of the universe, the Perfect

One; salutations to the Antaryamin of all beings, the soul of all creatures, the Lord of the universe. In this manner O king! In the Dvapara, the mortals praise the Lord of the universe.

"Hear how in Kali they worship Him by various ways laid down in Tantras. The wise sing His glories, adore Him who is black, yet brilliant, perfect in every limb, adorned with ornaments, equipped with His weapons and waited on by His attendants.

"O most exalted Purusha, O protector of those who bow to Thee, I bow to Thy lotus feet which are ever worthy of being meditated upon, which remove all difficulties, which yield all that is wished for, which are the abode of all piety, which are eulogised by Siva and Brahma, which are fit to be sought for refuge, which destroy the afflictions of Thy devoted servants and which form the raft in the sea of Samsara.

"O most exalted Purusha! I bow to Thy lotus feet. Thou art highly pious, because abandoning at the mere words of Thy father the prosperous kingdom which it is hard to renounce and which is coveted even by the gods, thou didst enter the forest and there didst thou pursue the illusory deer at the request of Thy beloved one.

"Thus, O king Nimi! The Lord, the source of all good, is worshipped by his devotees in the different Yugas in the manner appropriate to each Yuga as above mentioned.

"The wise who can discern the good in each of the various Yugas hold the Kali Yuga in high reverence, for in this age mortals attain Self-realisation by merely uttering the Names of the Lord and by mere singing His glories.

"To mortals, wading through a never-ending journey of births and deaths, there is no greater gain than their Self-realisation, which gives tranquillity of mind or eternal rest and freedom from the fetters of the world.

"The people of the Krita Yuga desire rebirth in the Kali Yuga, because they can attain Moksha by merely singing the

names of Lord Hari. Therefore in the age of Kali many who are devoted to Narayana will be born.

"O king, a great many people of Dravida where flows the rivers Tamraparni, Kritamala, Payasvini, Kaveri, Pratichi and Mahanadi, who drink the water of these rivers, generally become devoted to the Lord.

"O king Nimi! That devotee, who has absolutely abandoned all other duties, who has sought refuge with body, mind, and soul at the feet of Mukunda, the protector of His devotees, who is worthy of being sought after, is neither a slave nor a debtor to the deities, Rishis or other beings, relations or men or Pitris.

"If a beloved devotee resorts to the feet of the Lord without attraction for anything else and resigns all desires, if he commits sins by force of circumstances, error of discretion or otherwise, or if he does prohibited actions by mistake, Lord Hari who is present in the heart of His beloved devotee, redeems him from all sins that he might have acquired by chance."

Narada said, "O Vasudeva! King Nimi having heard Bhagavata Dharma from the nine Yogis, worshipped the sages with the priests and others who had assembled at the sacrifice.

"The sages then disappeared while they were all looking on. The king followed their instructions and attained the highest goal or supreme bliss.

"If you will also sincerely follow the above Bhagavata Dharma with faith and lead your life free from all attachment you will also attain the highest goal.

"Both of you, Vasudeva and Devaki have indeed attained everlasting fame, as Lord Hari was born as your son.

"Having cherished the love of a son towards Sri Krishna, you have purified yourselves by means of sight, embraces, conversations, sleeping together, sitting and feeding and other services.

"When Sisupala, Poundraka, Salva and other kings attain union with Lord Krishna by thinking Him only with feelings of hatred while lying down, sitting up, eating or in any other state, what to speak of them who are always devoted unto Him?

"Do not consider Krishna, the Antaryamin or the Inner Ruler, the Supreme Lord of six sorts of wealth, who is subject to no decay, whose supreme divine nature is hidden behind the mortal form, He has assumed at His will, the Lord of the universe, as your son.

"He has incarnated on this earth to destroy the demoniac kings who were a burden on this earth and to protect the righteous. He is playing like a mortal hiding his supreme powers. His fame for the liberation of men, is spreading all over."

"He who reads the above instructions of the nine sages as described by Narada to Vasudeva with sincerity and devotion, he who commits the sacred story to memory will shake off his sin here, will have his mind purified and attain everlasing bliss. He will be released from the illusion of the world and attain to final liberation. He shall attain the state of Brahman."

Om Santi Santi Santi

Hari Om Tat Sat.

APPENDIX

SRI KRISHNA-KARNAMRITAM

लसद्बर्हापीडं ललितललितस्मेरवदनं
भ्रमत्क्रीडापांगं प्रणतजनतानिर्वृतिपदम् ।
नवांभोदश्यामं निजमधुरिमाभोगभरितं
परं देवं वन्दे परिमिलितकैशोरकरसम् ।।१।।

1. I adore that Supreme Lord Krishna who has adorned Himself with the crown bedecked with the feathers of the peacock, whose face is full of smiles of love, whose eyes pour down a shower of merciful looks, whose body has the colour of the thick clouds (of the rainy day), who is with the sweet innocent beauty of adolescence, who is full of Madhurya Rasa (divine love or Prema) and who bestows immortality and frees from Samsara those who prostrate at His lotus-feet.

मनसि मम सन्निधत्तां मधुरमुखा मन्थरापांगा ।
करकलितललितवंशा कापि किशोरकृपालहरी ।।२।।

2. May that glowing face of the Lord full of grace, whose beauty is indescribable, that young boy (Krishna) with His beautiful flute in hand, ever shine in my heart.

सार्ध समृद्धैरमृतायमानैराध्मायमानैर्मुरलीनिनादैः
मूर्धाभिषिक्तं मधुराकृतीनां बालं कदा नाम विलोकयिष्ये ।।३।।

3. When shall I be able to behold that young boy who is an embodiment of beauty, who plays very skilfully on His flute and

produces scientific and melodious tunes from it, which is pleasing to the ears and which bestows immortality?

KUNTI'S PRAYER

(*Bhagavata: Skandha I, Ch. 8*)

नमस्ते पुरुषं त्वाऽऽद्यमीश्वरं प्रकृतेः परम् ।
अलक्ष्यं सर्वभूतानामन्तर्बहिरवस्थितम् ॥१॥

1. I adore Thee, the perfect Primeval Being, the Lord of all, who is above Prakriti, the unperceived, seated within and without every creature.

मायाजवनिकाच्छन्नमज्ञाधोक्षजमव्ययम् ।
न लक्ष्यसे मूढदृशा नटो नाट्यधरो यथा ॥२॥

2. How can I, an ignorant woman, worship Thee, the Imperishable Being, who art hidden behind the veil of Maya! Just as an actor does not identify himself with the act he plays, even so the ignorant worldly-minded does not perceive Thee.

तथा परमहंसानां मुनीनाममलात्मनाम् ।
भक्तियोगविधानार्थं कथं पश्येम स्त्रियः ॥३॥

3. Thou art hardly seen even by the pure-minded *Paramahamsas* (sages). How could then we, women, follow Thy path of devotion and behold Thee?

कृष्णाय वासुदेवाय देवकीनन्दनाय च ।
नन्दगोपकुमाराय गोविन्दाय नमोनमः ॥४॥

4. I bow again and again unto Sri Krishna, Vaasudeva, the joy of Devaki, the beloved darling of Nandagopa and unto Govinda (the protector of cows).

नमः पङ्कजनाभाय नमः पङ्कजमालिने ।
नमः पङ्कजनेत्राय नमस्ते पङ्कजाङ्घ्रये ॥५॥

5. Prostrations unto Thee who hast the lotus in Thy navel,

prostrations unto Thee who weareth a garland of lotus flowers, salutations unto Thee with lotus-like eyes and whose feet resemble the beautiful lotuses.

विपदः सन्तु नः शाश्वत्तत्र तत्र जगद्गुरो ।
भवतो दर्शनं यत्स्यादपुनर्भवदर्शनम् ॥६॥

6. May calamities befall us, now and then, O Teacher of the world, whereby we shall be blessed with a sight of Thee which causes immortality.

जन्मैश्वर्यश्रुतश्रीभिरेधमानमदः पुमान् ।
नैवार्हत्यभिधातुं वै त्वामकिञ्चनगोचरम् ॥७॥

7. The man whose vision is clouded by the pride of birth, wealth, learning and good fortune is not fit even to praise Thee who art easily attainable by the poor and the sinless.

नमोऽकिञ्चनवित्ताय निवृत्तगुणवृत्तये ।
आत्मारामाय शान्ताय कैवल्यपतये नमः ॥८॥

8. I bow to Thee, the wealth of the poor, who art not affected by the three qualities of Maya. I worship Thee, who delight always in Thy own Self, who is peace and the Lord of Moksha.

मन्ये त्वां कालमीशानमनादिनिधनं विभुम् ।
समं चरन्तं सर्वत्र भूतानां यन्मिथः कलिः ॥९॥

9. Thou art the Kaala, the Ruler of all, the one without beginning or end, moving everywhere equally. Unrest is only in the elements. (There is none in Thee).

न वेद कश्चिद्भगवंश्चिकीर्षितं
तवेहमानस्य नृणां विडम्बनम् ।
न यस्य कश्चिद्दयितोऽस्ति कर्हिचिद्
द्वेष्यश्च यस्मिन् विषमा मतिर्नृणाम् ॥१०॥

10. No one knows, O Lord, what Thou art about to do, Thou who behavest like an ordinary man. For Thee there is none too dear nor hateful. Different men think differently of Thee.

PRAHLADA'S PRAYER

(*Bhagavata: Skandha VII, Ch. 9*)

ब्रह्मादय: सुरगणा मुनयोऽथ सिद्धाः ।
सत्त्वैकतानमतयो वचसां प्रवाहैः ।
नाराधितुं पुरुगुणैरधुनापि पिप्रुः
किं तोष्टुमर्हति स मे हरिरुग्रजातेः ॥१॥

1. How is it possible for me, born of a cruel race, to praise that Hari whom Brahma and other gods including sages and Siddhas with their mind full of Sattva are unable even now to propitiate with their streams of prayers, engaged in the praise of His excellent qualities?

मन्ये धनाभिजनरूपतपः श्रुतौज-
स्तेजः प्रभावबलपौरुषबुद्धियोगाः ।
नाराधनाय हि बवन्ति परस्य पुंसो
भक्त्या तुतोष भगवान् गजयूथपाय ॥२॥

2. I consider that wealth, high birth, personal beauty, austerities, learning, energy, wisdom and even Yoga practices are incapable of winning the grace of the Lord Hari who was pleased with the great elephant for his mere devotion.

विप्राद्द्विषड्गुणयुतादरविन्दनाभ-
पादारविन्दविमुखात्श्वपचं वरिष्ठम् ॥
मन्ये तदर्पितमनोवचनेहितार्थ-
प्राणं पुनाति स कुलं न तु भूरिमानः ॥३॥

3. A Chandala who has resigned his body, speech and action, wealth and life to the Lord is far better than a Brahmin

with the twelve favourable conditions and yet averse to the contemplation of the lotus-like feet of Lord Hari. The former purifies the whole of his race but not the Brahmin full of pride.

नैवात्मनः प्रभुरयं निजलाभपूर्णो
मानं जनादविदुषः करुणो वृणीते ।
यद्यज्जनो भगवते विदधीत मानं
तच्चात्मने प्रतिमुखस्य यथा मुखश्रीः ।।४।।

4. The Lord who is ever contented in His own Self does not crave for the worship offered by little creatures of small intellect. But out of mercy and compassion He accepts whatever is offered unto Him which turns to his own benefit, just as the decoration or grace added to one's own face is seen reflected in the image on the mirror.

नाहं विभेम्यजित तेऽतिभयानकास्य-
जिह्वार्कनेत्रभ्रुकुटीरभसोग्रदंष्ट्रात् ।
आन्त्रस्रजः क्षतजकेसरशङ्कुकर्णा-
न्निर्ह्रादभीतदिगिभादरिभिन्नखाग्रात् ।।५।।

5. O Absolute Lord, I am not afraid of Thy terrific form with formidable mouth, tongue, eyes shining like the sun, fierce brows, fearful tusks, with a garland of intestines, mane drenched in blood, with ears erect like sticks, the roar that threatens the protectors of the world, with claws capable of tearing off the hearts of enemies.

त्रस्तोऽस्म्यहं कृपणवत्सल दुःसहोग्र-
संसारचक्रकदनाद्ग्रसतां प्रणीतः ।
बद्धः स्वकर्मभिरुशत्तम तेऽङ्घ्रिमूलं
प्रीतोऽपवर्गशरणं ह्वयसे कदा नु ।।६।।

6. But I am afraid, O friend of the distressed, of the terrible wheel of Samsara, in the midst of which I am placed bound by my own Karma. O most adorable Lord, when wilt

Thou be gracious enough to call me to Thy presence, the abode of immortality?

यस्मात्प्रियाप्रियवियोगसंयोगजन्म-
शोकाग्निना सकलयोनिषु दह्यमानः
दुःखौषधं तदपि दुःखमतद्धियाहं
भूमन् भ्रमामि वद मे तव दास्ययोगम् ।।७।।

7. I am afflicted in the terrible fire of sorrows of incarnating in various species of beings, through the separation from what is beloved and attainment of what is painful and by falling between the pairs of likes and dislikes, where any remedy for grief is only grief; still ignorant of it, O Perfect Being, I wander about in this Samsara. Be Thou pleased to accept my service and lift me up from this dire Samsara.

माया मनः सृजति कर्ममयं बलीयः
कालेन चोदितगुणानुमतेन पुंसः ।
छन्दोमयं यदजयार्पितषोडशारं
संसारचक्रमज कोऽतितरेत्त्वदन्यः ।।८।।

8. Prakriti creates, by Her inscrutable power of Karma (activity) with the help of Time under Thy gracious direction, the mind of unmanageable strength inclined to the performance of Vedic Karmas, which is the wheel of Samsara consisting of the sixteen spokes. O the unborn Lord! How can one without Thy grace try to attain freedom from it?

तस्मादमूस्तनुभृतामहमाशिषो ज्ञ
आयुःश्रियं विभवमैन्द्रियमाविरिञ्चात् ।
नेच्छामि ते विलुलितानुरुविक्रमेण
कालात्मनोपनय मां निजभृत्यपार्श्वम् ।।९।।

9. Therefore knowing their nature I do not crave for these pleasures which the ignorant seek after, viz. long life, wealth, fame, high positions of Indra upto Brahma even, nor do I wish

possession of powers like Anima, etc. which will be snatched away by Thee, O Lord, disguised as Time, I pray, keep me always in the vicinity of Thy servants.

कुत्राशिषः श्रुतिसुखा मृगतृष्णिरूपाः
क्वेदं कलेवरमशेषरुजां विरोहः ।
निर्विद्यते न तु जनो यदपीति विद्वान्-
कामानलं मधुलवैः शमयन्दुरापैः ॥१०॥

10. Of what use are the pleasures which are pleasing only to the ears but are unreal like the water in a desert? Of what use is this physical body, the abode of all diseases? Knowing this well, the world never becomes disgusted with it. They try to put out the fire of desires with drops of sensual pleasures which are very difficult to be obtained.

About This Book:

This book deals with the advent, Lilas and teachings of Lord Krishna, Avatara of Lord Vishnu, Flute-Bearer of Vrindavana, Joy of Devaki, Beloved of Radha, Redeemer of the Fallen, Friend of Arjuna, The Ideal of the Devotees, Narrator of Bhagavad Gita.

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